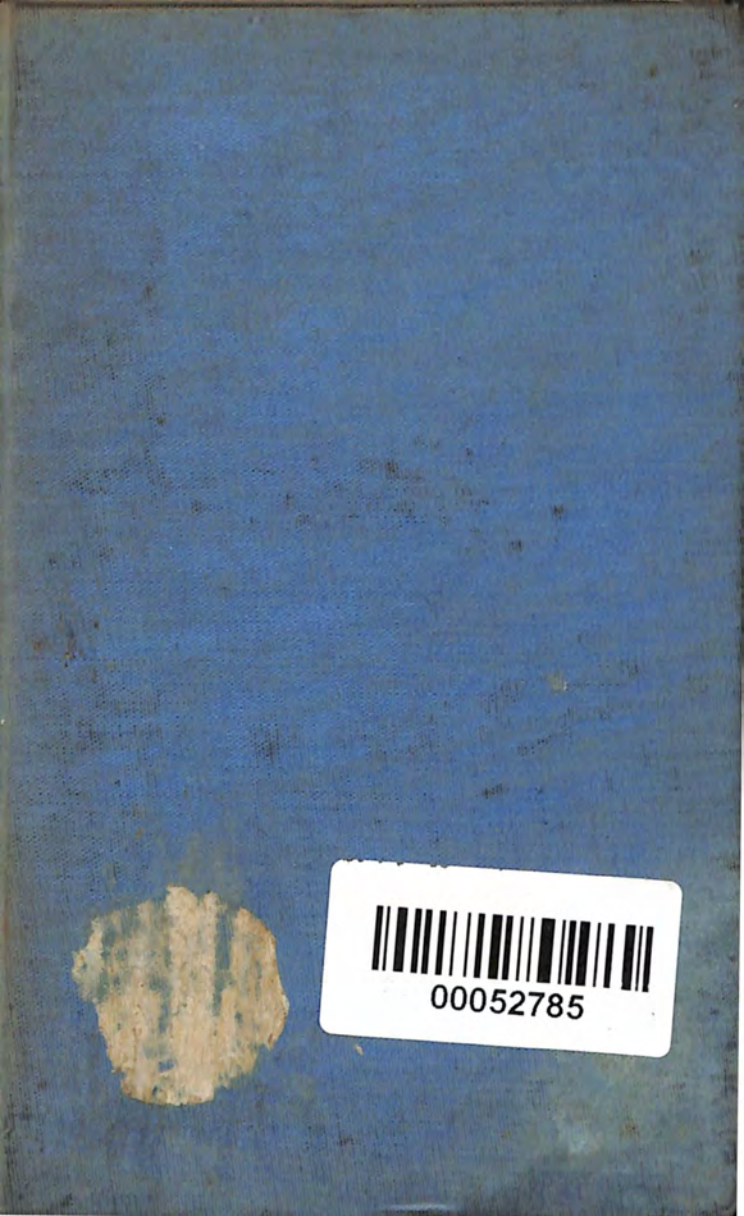
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EIDOLON,

OR THE COURSE OF A SOUL;

AND OTHER POEMS.

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EIDOLON,

OR THE COURSE OF A SOUL;

AND OTHER POEMS,

BY WALTER R. CASSELS

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LONDON
WILLIAM PICKERING
1850

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TO

CHARLES PEEL,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED BY

HIS FRIEND,

W. R. CASSELS.

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INTRODUCTION TO EIDOLON.

HAZLITT says, one cannot "make an allegory go on all fours," it must to a certain degree be obscure and shadowy, like the images which the traveller in the desert sees mirrored on the heavens, wherein he can trace but a dreamy resemblance to the reality beneath. It therefore seems to me advisable to give a solution of the "Eidolon," the symbol, which follows, that the purpose of the poem may at once be evident.

In "Eidolon" I have attempted to symbol the course of a Poet's mind from a state wherein thought is disordered, barren and uncultivated, to that which is ordered and swayed by the true Spirit of Poetry, and holds its perfect creed.

I have therefore laid the scene on a desert island,

whence, as from the isolation of his own mind, he reflects upon the concerns of life. At first he is a poet only by birthright '*Poeta nascitur.*' He has the poet's inherent love for the Beautiful, his keen susceptibility of all that is lovely in outward nature, but these are only the blossoms which have fallen upon him from the Tree of Life, the fruit is yet untasted. He has looked at the evil of the world alone, and seeing how much "the time is out of joint" has become misanthropic, and turns his back alike on the evil and the good.

Then comes Night, the stillness of the soul, with starlight breaking through the gloom. He gazes on other worlds, and pictures there the perfection he sighs for, but cannot find in this. Thus by the conception of a higher and nobler existence acquiring some impetus towards its realization.

We then find him lying in the sunshine with the beauties of Nature around him, whose silent teaching works upon him till the true SPIRIT OF POETRY speaks *within his soul*, and combats the misanthro-

py and weakness of the sensuous MAN, showing him that Action is the end of Life, not mere indulgence in abstract and visionary rhapsodies.

In the next scene he makes further advances, for the spirit of Poetry shows him that the beauty for which he has sought amongst the stars of heaven lies really at his feet; that Earth, too, is a star capable of equal brightness with those on which he gazes. He is thus brought from the Ideal to the Real.

The fifth scene emblems the influence of Love on the soul. It is the nurse of Poetry, and Sorrow is the pang which stimulates the divine germ into active vitality. Had he been entirely happy, and the course of his love run smooth, he would have been content to enjoy life in ease and idleness.

Next we find him looking broadly on life, on its utmost ills as well as its beauties, but not with the eye of the misanthrope, but of the Physician who searches out disease that he may find the remedy, and though the soul still sighs for the serenity and

placid delight of the ideal life, the world of Thought, the glorious principle of Poetry prevails, and he sacrifices self-ease, feeling that he has a nobler mission than to dream through life, and that here he must labour ere he can earn the right to rest.

Thus in the last scene the SPIRIT and the MAN have become one—he is *truly* a Poet. His prayer maintains the direct and divine inspiration of the Poet-Priest.

The action in short is the conflict of two principles within the breast, the False and the True, ending in the extinction of error and the triumph of truth

EIDOLON,

OR

THE COURSE OF A SOUL.

SCENE. *A desert Island. The sea-shore.*

MAN.

HOW lonely were I in this solitude,
This atom of creation which yon wave,
White with the fury of a thousand years,
Might gulf into oblivion, if the soul
Knew circumscription. Far as eye can reach
Around me lies a wild and watery waste,
With every billow sentinel to keep
Its prisoner fetter'd to his ocean cell—
What were it but a plunge—an instant strife—
Then liberty snatch'd from the clutch of Death
The Tyrant, who with mystic terror grinds
Men into slaves—But he who thinks *is* free,

And fineless as the unresting winds of heaven,
Now rushing with wild joy around the belt
Of whirling Saturn, then away through space
Till he and all his radiant brotherhood
Dwindle to fire-flies round the brow of Night.
Thought is the great creator under God,
Begotten of his breathing, that can raise
Shapes from the dust and give them Beauty's soul;
And though my empire be a continent,
Squared down from leagues to inches, what of that?
The mind contains a world within its frame
Which Fancy peoples o'er with radiant forms,
Replete with life and spirit excellence.
O! there is glory in the thought that now
I stand absolved from all the chilling forms
And falsities of life, that like frail reeds
Pierce the blind palms of those that lean on them,
And from the springs of my own being draw
All strength, and hope, and joyance, all that makes
Lone meditations sweet, and schools the heart
For prophecy. In the o'erpeopled world
We seem like babes that cannot walk alone,
But fasten on the skirts of other men,
Their creeds, conclusions, and vain phantasies,

Too languid, or too weak to poize ourselves;
But here the crutch is shattered at a blow,
Dependence made a thing for winds to blast,
And paraphrase in bitter mockery.

From this retreat, as from a cloister calm,
I dream upon the busy haunts of men
As things that touch me not. An empire riven,
A monarchy o'erthrown, here seem to me
Importless as a foam-bell's death. The world
And all its revolutions are now less
Within my chronicles, than is the ken
Of a star's orbit on the fines of space;
But like a mariner saved from the wreck
On this calm spot I stand, unscathed, secure
From the rough throbbings of the sea of strife,
And woe, and clamour, wherewith this world's life
Ebbs and declines unto the printless shore
Of death. O! blessed change, if there were one
To love me in this solitude, and make
Life beautiful. My soul is wearied out
With earth's fierce warfare, and its selfish ease;
The slights and coldness of the hollow crowds
That are its arbiters; the changeful face,

The upstart arrogance of base-born fools,
Who crown them with their golden dross, and deem
That the all-potent badge of sovereignty.

O thou, my heart! hast thou not framed for life
A golden palace in all solitude,
Whither the strains of quiet melodies
Float on the breath of memory, like songs
From the dim bosom of the evening woods,
Peopling its chambers with sweet poesy?
Hast thou not called the sunshine from the morn
To circle thee with a pure spirit life,
And with the softness of its tender arms
Clasp thee in the embrace of heav'nly love?
Hast thou not heard the music of the stars,
In the calm stillness of the summer night,
And read their jewell'd pages o'er and o'er,
Like the bright inspirations of a bard,
Till glowing strophes rung within thy soul
Of glad Orion and clear Pleiades?
Hast thou not seen the silv'ry moonshine thrill
Upon the dusky mantle of the night,
Like radiant glances through a maiden's veil,
Till shaken thence they fell in a pure shower

O'er flood and field and bosky wilderness,
Wreathing earth with the glory of a saint?

O! thus to dwell far from the stir of life,
Far from its pleasures and its miseries,
Far from the panting cry of man's desire,
That waileth upward in hoarse discontent,
And here to list but to that liquid voice
That riseth in the spirit, and whose flow
Is like a rivulet from Paradise—
To hear the wanderings of divine thought
Within the soul, like the low ebb and flow
Of waters in the blue-deep ocean caves,
Forming itself a speech and melody
Sweeter than words unto the aching sense—
To stand alone with Nature where man's step
Hath never bowed a grass-blade 'neath its weight,
Nor hath the sound of his rude utterance
Broken the pauses of the wild-bird's song;
And thus in its unpeopled solitude
To be the spirit of this universe,
Centering thought and reason in one frame,
And in the majesty of quenchless soul,
Rising unto the stature of a man,

That is to make life glorious and great,
Dissolving matter in the spiritual,
As the green pine dissolveth into flame;
Not on the breath of popular applause
That is the spectre of all nothingness;
Not on the fawning of a servile crew,
Who kiss the hem of fortune's purple robe,
And lick the dust before prosperity,
Waiting the cogging of the downward scale,
To turn from slaves to bravos in the dark;
Not on the favours of the politic,
Who in the smile of honour, Persian-like,
Pamper the pampered from their banquet halls,
But to his starving cry, when fortune frowns,
Mutter their falsehoods through the bolted gate;
But in the brightness of the inner soul,
The placitude of peace and holy thought,
The joyous lightness of the spirit's wings,
Sweeping with equal strokes the azure sky
Of Present, Past, and wide Futurity;
In the high tidemarks on the sands of life,
Where thought hath swept her purifying wave,
Bearing the treasures of the unsearched deep
To swell the riches of humanity.

That is a happiness apart from man
To aid, to sympathise with, or destroy;
In its calm solitude alike secure
From the broad adulation of the weak,
And the strained condescension of the great,
Both insults to the mighty soul within,
That is not prized but for its golden shrine.
Here there is that which makes the spirit free
And noble in the measure of its strength,
Untrammelled by conventionalities
That make the very light of heaven take worth
According to the casement it shines through.

O solitude! thy blessed power hath swept
All earthly passions from my soul like weeds
That choke the issues of eternal love.
What now to me are hatred and revenge?
Thoughts that if fleeting through the mind would fall
Like unknown birds upon a foreign shore,
Strange, wonderful; where no false hearts are nigh
To poison life with variance and strife.
O holy Nature! thou art only love
And peace and universal unity,
From thy sweet bosom springeth up no seed

Of bitterness and sorrow, that like thorns
Cling to the vesture of mortality,
Piercing the spirit through with cruel woe.
With thee my soul could dwell for evermore,
Expanding all good feelings day by day,
Till, at the last, like roses in full bloom
The blossoms fall from pure maturity.
Pride! Here no scale of inches is set up
For man to strain his littleness against,
But o'er me hangs the majesty of heaven,
Bright with the glory of the noontide sun;
Beneath, the Earth, that whispers "Thou art dust,
"Gat like a child forth from my fertile womb,
"And bone of my bone, thus, flesh of my flesh!"
Thou glorious firmament that like God's love
Enfoldest all creation utterly,
Making the pathway of the wheeling spheres
A splendour, and a triumph, and a joy,
That on the brightness of thine azure breast
Settest the constellated stars like gems,
To flash the glory of thy loveliness
Through all the fulness of unmeasured space.
Can madness in its raving cast a thought
To soar unto thy blessëd perfectness,

Nor stand subdued with reverence and awe
In contemplation of the Infinite?
O Earth! thou Mother and true Monitress!
Can thy frail children close their ears for aye
'Gainst the deep-hearted warnings of thy voice?
In the wild whirl of life the tones may die
Amid the clangour of contending foes,
But here, as in the stillness of the night,
Thy solemn teaching falleth on the soul
To the vibration of the low heart-beat.
Then what is there to charm me back to life?
To wrestle with the guilty and the vain,
And lose identity amid the crowd
Who struggle onward after base desire.
This quiet scene doth teach me how to weigh
Your pleasures and your vanities aright;
To hold as dross the honour that is flung
Around man like a winter covering,
Which the same hand can pluck away again,
And leave the outcast shivering in the blast.
There is no honour saving that within,
Which none, nor man, nor Death itself can snatch,
But which falls from the spirit in its flight
Like a prophetic mantle upon Time.

Pleasure! O World! in thine insanity
Thou sinkest Soul into a poor buffoon,
Garbëd in tinsel and false ornament
To play its antics on the stage of life,
A thing for fools to laugh at in their mirth.
Thou sat'st thy lust upon the sapless husks
That strew the highways of this pilgrimage,
Closing thine eyes unto their emptiness,
And out of folly turning sour to sweet.
Hast thou the joy that nature's converse sheds
Thro' all the pulses of the quiet soul?
The gentle calm that like a whispered song
Steals o'er the sense with sweetest languishment?
Hast thou the magic of the Beautiful,
Wreathing about thy spirit evermore,
In sunshine and in shadow; when the stars
Gather around the azure dome of heaven,
And the pale moon glides like a virgin bride
Humbly behind the footsteps of her love:
When the sweet morn dawns on the sleeping world
To bring reality to visions bright;
And on the curtain of dissolving mist
Arches the many-tinted sign of heaven?
Hast thou the minstrelsie of the wild woods,

Clear-tided strains floating along the sky,
Swelling, subsiding, like a silvery sea
Beneath the dulcet breathing of the south?
Hast thou that essence of all joyousness—
The glorious independence of the soul—
That spurneth man's usurpëd tyranny,
The power of wealth, and hapless circumstance,
And, sweeping on its own unaided wings,
Measures the circuit of the boundless sky?
What is thy wealth, that fadeth in the use,
And all the pomp and vanity it buys,
To the rich treasure of undying thought,
Encreasing evermore, till like a dower
It benizon humanity for aye?
All thy poor gold resolveth into dust
Before the test of such a scene as this:
Can it charm forth the blossom of a flower
Ere summer bids it with her gentle smile?
Can it restore the verdure to the leaf
When yellow Autumn marks it for her own?
Or, in the noontide bid the dew-shower rise
To fill one rosy chalice to the brim?
Go! gild thee with it, worldling, as thou wilt,
Yet all thy pains will leave thee but a fool!

Ay! there is love to beckon me away
And lead me to a fountain of delight,
Gliding before me in its purity,
Like some bright angel guiding souls to heaven.
O Love! have I not drained thee to the dregs,
Thy pleasures and thy sorrows equally;
Clinging unto thee as the Arab doth
To his low fountain in the wilderness?
Have I not gazed into thy tender eyes
And read the secret of thy holiness,
Cleansing my soul in humbleness and faith,
To shrine thee in thy fulness evermore?
Have I not clasped thee in my frenzied arms
And heard thy heart-beats answer back to mine,
Fainter and fainter till the deep voice stilled
In the eternal silence of the grave?
O be to me henceforth but some sweet dream
Illumining the sky of Memory:
A fixëd star of everlasting light
To pilot me along the sea of life,
And keep the bearings of the spirit true.
Visit me in imagination's train,
The sweetest and the fairest child of Thought,

Till thro' my being, as thro' columned aisles
When incense from the altar upward wreaths,
There float the fragrance of thy breath divine.
Circle my soul in its far wanderings
Thro' spirit lands and empyrean heights,
Where though it sink in wide bewilderment,
Thou wilt enfold it in thy dewy arms,
And pillow it to strength and fearlessness!
Be to me like a heaven beyond all Time,
Dreamt of, and worshipped in this pilgrimage—
The habitation of all pure desire,
Solace of sorrow, and the home of rest,
Where I may lay me from life's troublous way,
And feel Eternity rise in my soul!
No, World! the cords that bound me unto thee
Are snapt in sunder ne'er to join again,
Thy voice is waning fainter on mine ear,
And thine allurements powerless and vain.
There springeth up within me a new want,
A perfect yearning for the spiritual,
That shaketh from its pinions all the cares
And interests of earth, like cleaving dust
That clogs its upward winging to the skies.
Wend onward, as thou wilt in weal or woe,

Swell the rude triumph of thy battle march,
Spread thy gay banners broadly to the wind,
And let thy clarions ring among the spheres;
Laurel thy heroes and thy favourites,
And pluck the crowns again from off their brows;
Worship thy follies, and thine empty gains,
And barter life for mammon—gold for dross.
Here let me lie upon the rear of Time,
Unheeded, unremembered, and alone,
Like a quick seed dropt by a flying dove,
That groweth unto blossom and to fruit!

SCENE. *Night.*

MAN.

How still are all things now in earth and heaven!
From the green-tided woods no rippling stir
Breaks on the shore of silence; the sweet birds
That sing, like naiads from the crystal deeps,
Amid the murmurous coverts, now are mute
As dreams of faded happiness, and life
Seems calmly slumb'ring in the arms of death.
The far waves alone are rocking in unrest,
With moonlight flashing o'er them, but their sound

Dies in their own wild bosom, like a song
Murmuring in the spirit of a man.
Thus is a poet's soul!—around it hangs
The darkness of this world's reality,
Its cares and struggles and necessities;
But in its firmament for ever shinès
The starlight of divine imaginings,
Shedding upon the waves of restless feeling,
And aspirations for the undefined,
The glory of a cloudless hemisphere.

O Stars! that gaze upon me from on high,
Like angels from the gates of Paradise,
That weave your myriads in a golden chain
To bind creation with the Beautiful,
As locks are interrun with precious gems
To deck a queen out for her royalty:
Hear me, ye bright ones, for a poet's love,
And let light fall upon my swelling soul,
To crest each rising thought with purity!
There was a time—in youth, ere yet the sands
Of life clogged 'neath satiety, but ran
Lighter than blithe rills down a mountain's side;
There was a time, when in my soul a voice

Rang faintly like a huntsman's horn afar,
Sounding along a forest; and I arose,
And listed, as the bounding Antelope
Starts at the echo of a falling bough.
Louder it grew, and clearer—" Search for it!"
What?—It melted from me, but the voice still came.
Then up I gat, and to the pressing world
Sped on the wings of passion, striving on
Thro' pleasure and thro' pain, alike unchecked.
Then, what were lets to me? Amongst the strong
I wrestled for ambition's upper seats—
Clung to the slippery shrouds of policy—
And in my fury prayed for eagle's wings
To poize me in the shadow of the sun.
At wealth I grasped as a poor crippled wretch
Grasps at the crutch that steadies him along;
Yet not for it but for the power it brought,
For, Timon-like, within my heart of hearts
I cursed the yellow dust I trampled on.
But by the wayside I sat down and wept
As a child weeps above some shattered toy.
Oh Misery! to climb the steep of life
Led by a phantom without form or truth—
To find reality still rising up

To crush hope's fabrics with relentless force.
All was a fiction, but the voice said "Search!"
And glory flashed before me like a wisp,
Dazzling me on to bloodshed, and to strife.

Upon the field I stood with Victory,
And Death in all its ghastliness—Around
The dim watchfires stood like a burning wall
Betwixt the dead and living. On that night
Ye saw me, ye pure ministers of heaven,—
Shone on my anguish and my bitter tears.
Then, when the mangled forms of fellow-men,
With hideous passion stiff upon their lips,
Blanch'd 'neath the twilight of your glimmering!
Oh! there lay one beside me—a mere youth—
Whose dying hands had pressed unto his lips
A long fair tress, through which his dying sigh
Crept, as in happier days perchance did love's.
Witness, ye stars, of my abasement then,
Judged and condemned by that poor lover's pledge,
Lying there like a messenger of heaven,
Breathing of peace and love, mid deadly hate.
Glory! thou mirage on this desert life,
Charming the weary on to water springs

That shrivel up to barrenness ere reach'd!
Thou shadow of a shadow that departs
As the eye scans its bodiless outlines!
Thou golden-imaged Ruin and Despair!
When this earth cracks, like a poor blasted rock,
Before the burning of Almighty wrath,
Thy pallid spectre shall rise up to judge
The wretched victims that did trust in thee!

"O Heaven!" I said, "lead me to love and peace;
Love, that makes all things calm and beautiful,
And like the sun, e'en in its setting, flings
A glory o'er the cloudy peaks of Time.
Peace—that doth hush the throbbing voice of life,
Till through the stillness of the Poet's soul,
The echoes of Seraphic harmonies
Float like a spirit through the blue eterne."
I said—"I will sit neath the ancient woods,
And list unto the voices of the winds
Coming from far o'er spirit lands, and full
With stolen snatches of their utterance."
I said—"I will lay bare my soul unto the sun,
And let its glory rest there till it charm
Forth from its womb, as flowers from the cold ground,

All lovely thoughts and high imaginings
That shed sweet perfume o'er the waste of life.
And when the sickle of autumnal time
Gathereth in the harvest of ripe thought,
Nourish and strengthen long futurity."

Then as an eagle fleeth to his crag
High in the stillness of the dim cloudland,
Fled I from man into the trackless woods,
To sate my soul with quietude and song.
Then, too, ye saw me, ye pure orbs of heaven,
And sent your blessed radiance to my heart
In the still twilight of my calm content!
Then came an answer to the unseen voice—
"O holy calmness of the inner soul!
Treasure of treasures! sweetness of all sense!
Athwart the smoothness of whose liquid tide
Floateth the spirit of eternal love,
Tracing a pathway to the All-Divine!
Thine is the perfectness of earthly bliss,
The brimming of life's chalice o'er with peace,
Till thro' all thought and feeling, the pure draught
Sheddeth its gladness and serenity.
Thine is a joyance passing utterance,

A deep delight, that like the songs of heaven,
Swell through its fulness, but are mute without.
Thou art the goal of most sublime desire,
The haven that all longing seeketh for,
Where, shaded from the storms and blasts of life,
The bark glides gently down the stream of Time."

How cloudless is this azure firmament!
Brighter than all the dreams of sinless youth!
Deeper than the deep heart of woman's love!
Now as I gaze upon each shining star,
What visions steal upon me with its rays,
Of that which makes its glorious excellence!
Can there be revelation of high truths
But through the channels of weak sense alone,
Thus like a fountain filt'ring thro' the clay.
Or doth the soul hold converse spiritual
With powers unseen that fill the universe,
Receiving, as by intuition, things
That man attains not by intelligence?
Is not the spirit perfect in itself,
Unmingled with the base alloy of earth
That prisons it within this narrow sphere?
Hath it not apprehension natural,

Attributive as immortality,
Unshackled by an organ that will die
Beneath the friction of a few short years?
O there is blindness on us in this life,
That seeth not the things which lie around,
E'en in the circuit of our littleness!
But death will loose the scales from off our eyes,
And smite our fleshly dwelling place in twain;
Freeing the spirit, till with joyous wings
It cleave the limits of immensity.
Yet *now* the soul will shake its fetters off,
And yearn unto the freedom of the skies,
Like a poor bird whose life is liberty.

Yon star, methinks, must be a glorious world,
Where Nature hath a spiritual life
And bloometh on in Spring perpetual,
Unsatiating in its loveliness.
Verdure of herb and leafy plenitude
Spread o'er it like a vesture, and the glow
Of sunlit waters smiling from afar,
Half as in fancy, half reality.
The skies above it glassy and serene
As the reflection of its own repose,

And every alternation of the light
Shedding new beauties on the scene below.
Thus far in fashion, kin to Earth as Time
Beareth the impress of Eternity,
But differing henceforth as the gentle dove
Doth from the vulture on its carrion:
The dwellers on this paradisal sphere
Methinks, must be of glorious lineament,
Clad with the brightness of eternal youth,
And buoyant with internal blessedness.
Spirits that shining with untarnished light,
Radiate, and make matter luminous,
Filling the eyes with sweet felicity,
And love, and peace, and all emotions pure.
No sorrow there to make the vision dim,
And wash the mellow ripeness from the cheek;
No guilty deed to brand the heart with shame,
And write its direful sentence on the brow;
No rankling venom struggling through the veins,
And blasting all the kindliness within,
Till like a torrent bursting o'er restraint,
It spread its desolation on mankind;
But a pure regnant holiness and love,
Directing impulse with most queenly sway

To ends of tenderness and charity ;
A nature purified by fellowship
With angels and bright ministers of Heaven,
That wander thither from their homes above
On missions of benignity and grace.
And in this pleasaunce, as by holy need,
There reigneth deep communion of soul,
That frameth as it were one atmosphere
Of joy, and hope, and blessedness for all ;
No selfish pleasures fluttering before
To woo satanic emulation forth,
But all combining for one common weal,
Moved still by sympathetic influence.

How passing beautiful must they not be,
Thus dower'd with Virtue's highest attributes,
That from the spiritual springeth up
A living fount of light and loveliness.
Soul is the life of Beauty, as the sun
Is of the universe it luminates.
O what were matter, fashioned ne'er so fair,
But for the beaming of that quenchless light
That plays around it, like the radiance
Of heaven's own glory stamped upon its work ?

What were the charm of the soft arching brow
White as the snow-flake 'neath its golden braid?
What were the dimpled cheek with roseate shades
Spread o'er it like the budding of a flower,
The lips' ripe crimson, and the melting eye,
Unbrightened by the sunshine from within,
The emanations of seraphic thought,
And full emotion, kindling into life
Light, grace, the temple that they glorify?
Oh Death! when thou dost bear the soul away
The charm is shattered—the illusion gone!
Ay, they are beautiful, and as bright forms
Make fair the mirrors that they image in,
So are their courses glorious and glad.
Still doth their swelling harmony ascend
In thrilling cadence to the gates of heaven,
Making the air about them sweet with joy,
As summer's breath with floral incense fumes;
And every echo learns the words of love,
And wonders at its sweet deliciousness,
Repeating o'er and o'er the honied tones
Till they infuse into their secret souls.

O ye bright orbs! your shining would be dimmed

By sin and all its pallid consequence,
Till scarce a glimmer fluttered on the sky
To 'lume the dreamer to your sadden'd sphere.
But ye have held your priceless birthright sure,
And walk among the panoply of heaven,
Clear and true-hearted as the sons of God.
Yet may we gaze upon you from afar
As the unstained gaze on the innocent,
Lovely and peerless in their purity,
Smitten and wondering with humbleness
Of that which is your everlasting dower;
Quenching within us pride and earthliness
Before the glance of your serenity;
Aspiring ever for the spirit life,
That casting off this fleshly tenement,
With all its weakness and infirmities,
Entereth on the cycle of the just,
Unstained, immortal, glorious and strong!

SCENE. *A Grove—Noontide.*

MAN.

THERE is no place so sweet as the greenwoods
In summer, heaven and earth awake with sounds

Melodial; the ripple of the breeze
Amongst the sun-green leaves, and pliant boughs,
Just like the rustle of young summer's dress;
The songs of birds, and the low mystic hum
Of bees amongst their floral treasuries;
Sweetest of all, the cool and liquid tones
Of brooks—nature's true-hearted bards, who draw
Bright inspirations from a pebbled ridge,
And frame them into sweetest melody.
There's poetry in every pendent leaf
If we could read them truly; but our hearts
Grow strange to nature's language in the world,
Nor can translate their heaven lore. Ev'ry change
From bud to full-blown ripeness, thence again
To sereness and decay, is as the flow
Of a short tale, whose moral is life's history.
The woods were made for poets and all dreamers,
Men who philosophize Time's hour-glass down,
And younger grow, till with the last shot sand—
They die. The very leaves are fanciful,
And write their maxims on the sward in sun
And shadow. Here I'll lay me down and dream
An hour away amongst these violets!

O my heart joys to gaze upon the sky
Gleaming athwart green leaves, like happiness
Above the gloom and shadow of the world!
Then, thought first feels its attribute divine,
And like a callow eagle spreads its wings,
And makes its rest amid the lumin'd heavens.
The lark sings poized above me in the sun,
Like Moslem in his gilded minaret
Calling the faithful unto matin prayer.
There would my spirit follow thee, sweet bird,
Ling'ring for ever in the midway air,
Earth shrouded 'neath me by ascending mists,
And sunny-crested cloudlets, like the base
Of bright Imagination's airy halls,
Whose roof is the star-fretted empyrean:
Thence let the world hear my full gushing joy,
And thrill at pleasures they can never know,
Hear the sweet tumult of my throbbing breast,
Like a clear spring of joyance bubbling up
And overflowing time and space with streams;
Whilst I, wrapt in my own high blessedness,
Drain the sweet nectar shareless and alone.

SPIRIT.

The lark is beauteous in its skiey home,
Amid the confluence of heaven's brightest rays
Singing for heaven and earth undying hymns
Of beauty, and deep-hearted tenderness;
But more, when sinking on its own sweet song,
It flutter, jubilant, to its soft nest
Couched in the lowly bosom of the earth.
And so it is with life. Man may build up
A pillar of misanthropy and self,
Raising him, statue-like, above his kind,
And emulate the monumental stone
In coldness and stern-browed indifference,
But in the paths of love, and sympathy,
And lowly charity, true glory lies,
The substance of all joy and happiness.
Let not thy spirit spurn man's fellowship,
And force the stream of kindness up life's steep,
Till, 'mid the rocky peaks of Thought it flow
Unmargined by the verdant bloom of Act.
Shun Self! 'tis like the worm a rosy bud
Folds in its young embraces till it gnaw
The heart out. Nature's is no volume writ

For his interpreting who measures still
Her wisdom by the inverted standard rule
Of his own barrenness and blind conceit.
There's not a flower but with its own sweet breath
Cries out on selfishness, the while it gives
Its fragrant treasures to the summer air;
And not a bird within the greenwood shade,
The burden of whose gentle minstrelsie
Is not of love and open-hearted joy.
The blest of earth are they whose sympathies
Are free to all as streams by the wayside,
Cheering, sustaining by their limpid tide,
The weary and the footsore of the earth.

O summer sunshine! floating round all things,
Meadow and hill and leafy coverture,
Steeping all Nature in most sweet delight,
Till upward from the bosom of the earth,
Before so cold and blank and unadorned,
Spring fairest flowers to gladden and adore—
That fillest the blue vault of heaven with smiles
As of a mother smiling on her child,
Pure, holy, without guile or artifice,
Melting the spirit of each fleeting cloud

From darkness unto beauty and soft grace—
Thou art the emblem of that perfect love
That sheddeth joy around it evermore,
And from whose sweetness rise all gentle thoughts
As scent from vernal flowers; that in the heart
Waketh all goodness by a magic spell,
As the fine touch of blindness makes a page
Start into instant light and eloquence.
Cherish thou kindness ever, for this life
Would be most blissful if its sunshine came
To strengthen on Endeavour to its aim.

MAN.

Methinks there is no blessedness in life
More full than that which springs in solitude;
A fount unruffled by the outer world,
Unmingled with its honey or its gall;
But welling through the spirit silently,
Like a pure rill within a garden's bounds.
Let my life float, like the sad Indian's lamp,
Along the waves of Time, unpiloted
Save by the breath of heaven, and the stirred tide,
Till when its course be run it sink to rest
Beyond the ken and fathoming of man;

Let me not be a legend mouthed about
By empty gossips o'er their clinking cups,
Who tell the last sad tale and with a smack
Turn to the merits of the passing wine.
'Twere something to be wept for by the young
And beautiful, but tears are things that dry
Sooner than dew upon the waking flowers,
Leaving the heart e'en gladder for their flow.
O could my life subside into a dream
Rising amid the stillness of calm sleep,
Filling the soul with radiant images
Of love, and grace, and beauty, all serene
And shadowless as yon blue sky is now!—
Would that the outward shows and forms of things
Could melt away from cold reality
To the warm brightness of the spiritual,
Losing the grossness of this present world,
As a fair face doth mirror'd in a glass—
And thus, reposing in seraphic trance,
Let the few years of earth's existence pass,
Like minutes in the quietness of sleep,
And waken to the glorious dawn of Heaven,
Refreshed, and scatheless from mortality.

SPIRIT.

Thy wish, attain'd, would brand thee deep with shame;
Life was not made to rust in idle sloth
Until the canker eat its gloss away,
But like a falchion to grow bright with use,
And hew a passage to eternal bliss!
Canst thou stand 'fore that glory of the sun,
That like God's beacon on Eternity
Wakeneth up Creation unto Act,
And sheddeth strength and hope to cheer them on,
Yet rebel-wise cast down thine untried arms,
Ere foes assail thee, or thy work be done?
No, there's a power within the soul that yearns
For action, as the lark for liberty,
Pursuing ever with insatiate thirst
And aspiration, some unsubstant aim.
There is assertion of the rule divine,
That rest must follow labour as the night
Closeth the turmoil of the wakeful day;
Then let the bright sun lead thee like a king
With dauntless heart to struggle and o'ercome,
Uncheck'd by mischance or poor discontent,
That shrivels up a monarch to a clown,

And rends his purple into beggar's rags.
Let no alluring plea of sensuous ease
Draw thee away from honour's rugged path,
Till sleep fall on thee from the wings of death,
And bear thee to sweet dreams and Paradise!

MAN.

How sweet it is to read fair Nature o'er
Reclining thus upon her gentle breast,
Like a young child that in her mother's face
Traceth the motions of deep tenderness,
Listing the murmurs of strange melodies
That wander ever round her fresh and clear,
Whence the sweet singers of our earth have caught
Rapt harmonies and echoed them for aye!
What study is like Nature's lumined page,
So glorious with perfect excellence,
That like the flowing of a mighty wind
It fills the crevices and deeps of soul!

No upper chamber and no midnight oil
For me, to throw dim light upon the scroll,
Whose feeble pedantry dulls down the soul
From high imaginings to senseless words;

But for my lamp I'll have the summer sun
Set in the brightness of the firmament;
My chamber shall be canopied by heaven,
Gemmed by the glory of the fixëd stars,
And round it floating evermore the breath
Of nascent flowers, and fragrant greenery:
And for my books, all lovely things in Earth
And air, and heaven, all seasons and all times.
The Spring shall bring me all the thoughts of youth,
Its budding hopes and buoyant happiness;
'Twill sing me lays of tenderness and love,
That are the first sweet flowers of childhood's days,
And win me back to purity and joy
With the untainted current of its breath.
Summer will be the volume of the heart,
Expanded with the strength of growing life,
Swelling with full brimm'd feeling evermore,
And power and passion longing to be forth;
'Twill tell of life quick with the seed of thought,
Rising incessant into bud and bloom,
And shedding hope and promise over Time,
Like the sweet breath that tells the mariner
Of fragrant shores fast rising in his course.
Then Autumn, glorious with accomplishment,

The harvest and the fruitage of the past,
Stored with the gladness and the gain of life,
Or sadden'd by its unproductiveness;
And Winter like a prophecy would come
To warn me of the end that draweth nigh.
Each falling leaf that flutter'd from its bough,
Pale with the sereness of keen-biting frosts,
Would teach me that the ties of earth must loose,
One after one, the interests and joys
That made life's excellent completeness up,
Until the trunk, stripped of its verdant dress,
Stand in the naked dreadfulness of death.
Thus will my soul learn wisdom true and deep,
Not in the school of petty prejudice,
Where truth is measured out by interest,
And duty shrinks into expediency;
Not in the volumes of pedantic fools,
Who bind up knowledge, mummy-like, with terms,
That sunder'd, the enclosure turns to dust;
Not in the false philosophy of man,
Who speculates on causes and effects,
Yet thrusts his hand into the scorching flame,
And wonders that it singeth in the act—
But from her teaching who can never err,

The Pure, the Beautiful, the Mother mind,
That in the fulness of her unsearch'd soul,
Shrineth all knowledge and all loveliness!

SPIRIT.

Ay! there are lessons of true wisdom writ
In every page of Nature, from the flower
Man treads beneath him as he wanders past,
The humblest and the weakest thing of earth,
Yet with its sweet breath rising on the air
To make the fragrance of the summer full,
Up to the rattle of the thunder cloud,
The voice of heaven heard rolling through the spheres
Till earth is dumb and stricken at the sound;
Then let thy heart lean to them reverently,
Knowing that action is the end of thought;
And thus from Nature bring thou precepts still
To guide thee nobly through this pilgrim world!
One deed wrought out in holiness and love
Is richer than all vain imaginings!
Let then her lore fulfil thee evermore,
And like high inspiration send thee forth
To prophecy aloud unto mankind
Of love, and peace, and verity sublime.

Let not disaster daunt thee, nor reproach,
No feeble yelpings of the toothless curs
That follow on the heels of all who walk
The highways of this world in faithfulness,
And strength, but like a wild swan on the wave
Let every billow swelling round thy breast
Raise thee in spirit nigher unto heaven!

SCENE. *A Grove—Sunset.*

MAN.

O, Earth is beautiful! In such a scene
The everlasting curse that sin entailed
Strikes on the heart by contrast, as though heaven
Rolled back its portals till the holy wrath
Of God burst on Creation. All is still
Save the rapt nightingale, that sings to rest
Earth's warring multitudes, and this bright rill
Whose voice is eloquent as poesy.
The very breeze is hush'd that stirr'd the leaves
To pleasure, and the golden clouds float on
As though an angel steered them o'er the plain
Of heaven. It is a blessed thing to feel
The melody of silence in the woods,

When outer life is hushed, and in the heart
The echo of its murmurous sweetness sounds,
As in the pauses of a song the harp
Still vibrates. 'Tis a test by which the soul
Lies open unto Nature, for its frame,
Impure or guilty, unto discord turns
Those tones of peace and harmony. Perchance
These woods ne'er heard the voice of man till now,
Nor know the motion of his jarring thoughts.
I feel the weight of judgment o'er my head
If, Adam-like, I bring the brand of guilt
On this unfallen Paradise. In sooth
This scene is rich in Eden loveliness,
And peace, and the rude din of jabbering crowds
Unheard as when Earth's generations yet
Lay in the womb of Time. How soft the air
Breathes with the scent of flow'rs, o'er which the dew
Hangs like a charm of sweetness! Ah, fair Earth!
'Tis sad to die and leave thee e'en for heaven;
Yet the blue sky above is glorious,
And brings the spirit visions of bright scenes
Yet lovelier than this. There is a veil
Of dreamy beauty o'er it, from whose woof
The mystic star-eyes glimmer like a bride's.

In such an hour peace steals upon the soul,
Like the soft twilight o'er the toiling world;
There is no room for passion—strife would blush
As at the chiding of a gentle glance.

SPIRIT.

Eve brings forth bright thoughts from the soul, like stars
From the blue heavens. Its sweet serenity
Is as a boon of mercy from above,
Restoring rest unto a toil-doomed world.
Dost thou not turn from this to the pure calm
Of Heaven as by a spell?

MAN.

Ay! yonder cloud,
Bright with the last faint glances of the sun,
Bears my soul thither.

SPIRIT.

All the Beautiful
Points like the pilot-flower, magnetically,
To Heaven, where beauty is accomplish'd. Earth
Is but the reproduction of one form,
Whose perfectness is heaven, and thus the mind,

Unblinded by the blighting mist of sin,
Sees emblems of its everlasting hope
In Nature's loveliness. This quiet hour
When the calm'd heart cries truce unto itself,
And lays the weapons of resentment down,
And bitterness and anger, yields the bliss
That in completeness is the bliss of Heaven.
The Earth is ne'er so sweet as when it seems
By intuition to the soul like Heaven,
And in the spirit earthliness dissolves
Like mist before the sunshine.

MAN.

There's a power
Within the soul that makes it yearn to soar
Up to the Infinite, and, eagle-like,
Bask in the unveiled glory of the sun;
But this frame clogs its aspirations all,
Like gyves that press the struggling captive down.
Tell me of other worlds?

SPIRIT.

There is a world
Bright as yon star that flecks the wing of night,

And sheds its glory o'er the Universe,
Made up of such pure loveliness within,
That like a gem it glistens through the crust,
And makes heaven luminous. A chasten'd sound
Of never failing melody still floats
About it, like an ocean, undulating
To the sweet breath of summer scented airs,
From hill to dale and leafy-tufted woods,
That catch the humours of the golden sun,
And deck them in his livery. There falls
From the soft twilight gloom of sparry grots,
And crystal pillar'd caverns, many a stream
That breaks in light and music on the soul,
And like a diamond-sandall'd spirit glides
In beauty through the land, margined by flowers
That mirror in its tide, and seem like stars
In heaven. There are flowers everywhere, in vale
Hill-side and woodland, in the sun and shade,
That whether dreams be on them, or they wake,
Send evermore sweet incense to the heavens.
Sun-crested mountains, softened into grace
By the blue tints of distance, lend new charms
To verdant swarded valleys, in whose lap
As in a mother's bosom, waters lie

And ripple to the wooing of the winds.
The very clouds that scan the blue of heaven,
Fused sometimes by the sunshine as with soul,
Or flaked by the light fancies of the gale,
Form to the vision labyrinths of grace
And beauty, that melt into space, and spread
A hemisphere of magic o'er the orb—
And thro' this world at morning, noon, and night,
A dreamy sweetness wanders, varying
From blessing unto blessing, that the sense
Of pleasure dull not with satiety.

MAN.

And it is habited?

SPIRIT.

By beings framed
After the model of all perfectness.
In some the majesty of strength sublime,
Rejoicing on the nervous power of life
Like the broad noontide sun, with glances bold
And open as the soul lies unto God,
And brows that thought wreathes with a glorious
crown

Of fadeless immortality, which shines
Like lightning playing round the arc of heaven.
And some there are as gentle and as fair
As flowers made animate, whose motions are
More graceful than the sweep of evening gales
O'er moonlit waters; and whose beauty fills
The air they breathe with sweetness, and to life
Is what the sunshine is to summer. All
Are filled with deathless spirits, capable
Of joy, and love, and holiness, that make,
Together, heaven's felicity. The strong,
Tho' they be trenchëd round with mighty thoughts,
Without one breach for weakness, in their souls
Feel the sweet want for love's pure tenderness,
That, like the dew, may soothe the eagle's breast,
And send it soaring nigher to the sun.
Thus to their lives they graft the fragile blossom,
Whose sweetness is an amulet to lay
Life's else perturbëd spirit; so that all
Have oneness of necessity and good.

MAN.

O! I can compass spirit that could grasp
A star and dash it from its orbit, till

It flew through space eternally, and whelmed
Myriads of spheres in flaming ruin, yet
Cannot consummate that which is so light,
One hour's emancipation from this clod
To wander thro' such worlds. Which brightest orb
In heaven's wide treasury shines in thy tale?

SPIRIT.

Listen! e'en in this paradise there works
A mighty power of evil, conjured there
By acts of foreknown consequence. This rears
A standard of rebellion against God,
And whirls a giddy tide of interest
And pleasure to suck souls unto itself,
The centre—dashing sorrow like salt foam
To sterilize humanity. Yet still
There is a virtue given to make its guiles
Shrink into ruin, like a withered leaf,
And pass the spirit scatheless. 'Tis a strife
Of spirit against spirit, whose result
Of loss or gain fashions eternity.

MAN.

O! it is fine to brace the spirit up,

To struggle with its foes, and feel it swell
Till it could shake a thousand demons off
As lightly as a lion doth the drops
That eve sheds on him. There's no joy like that
Of danger met, and danger overcome.
The soul is like a sword that rusts to lie
Inglorious in its scabbard, but will flash
Bright as the lightning in the battle field.
Spirit! will death transport to such a world?

SPIRIT.

Thou art upon it—It is earth—Itself
All lovely, but man's soul so warped and blind
He scarce can see her beauty, but still scans
The stars of heaven for that which lies displayed
Beneath his feet. The heart rears phantoms up
To overthrow reality, and make
Intention stand for Act. 'Tis well to boast
Of spirit warfare in another sphere,
Yet like a craven slight the trumpet call
That bids man up and strive in this. In life
There is a struggle evermore, wherein
The spirit grapples with such subtle foes,
That victory is glory infinite.

No crumbling stone to whet ambition on,
That 'neath the sapping of one wave of Time,
Melts to the substance of oblivion.
It is nobility to walk through life
With a stout heart and cheerful courage on—
To look on sorrow with undaunted mien,
And smile away the fears that trouble brings—
To bear unto the stricken solace sweet
As water to the wounded, and to be
A strength and an assurance to the weak.
Ay! life, like matter, is atomic, and
Man blows unto the winds what multiplied
Makes up the universe. This radiant earth,
Which, in its penitential moods the heart
Feels were a paradise if guilt were not,
Sprung from the womb of space, in perfectness
Co-equal with the fairest orb that holds
Vice-royalty in heaven for the sun;
Form, substance, seeming, and that vivid charm
Which is the soul of matter like in each.
Mind differs only, making fair seem dull
With what it glances through, and thus yon star
Viewed with man's callous nature, would resolve
Into reality as cold as Earth.

O Earth! thou Beauty! and thou Wonderful!
That from thy bosom like a living womb
Bringest all forms of loveliness and grace
Into the gladness of the summer air—
That givest to the winds that are the breath
And heaving of thy passion, wingëd thoughts
To root, seed-like, into the ground, and spring,
Bud, blossom, nourish'd ever by young showers,
And moon-distillëd dews, until they make
Thine utterance odorous. That from thy soul,
As from an unseen presence of divinest light,
Dartest into the spirit subtle rays
That quicken life to blessing, as the breath
Of being stirreth the inanimate,
Making existence joy, and love, and power.
O woods! and rustling forests! Ye that send
Soft murmurs ever to the ends of heaven,
And from your breast, as from a poet's soul,
Issue all sweetest melodies of birds
And leafy eloquence. O springs! and streams!
Blithe hearted wanderers throughout the earth,
Tracing your footsteps still with flowers that rise
Like stars beneath the feet of Night. O hills!

O mighty mountains! round whose hoary brows
Gather the mystic clouds of heaven, like thoughts
Of unimagined wisdom, that are rocked
To slumber by the deep-songed hurricanes,
Sons of Destruction, and whose waking voice
Is the eternal thunder. O wide ocean!
Swelling for ever with the mighty throes
Of Nature's agony and ceaseless Act;
Emblem of Time and of Eternity!
Time the great worker, the Implacable,
That with the roll of human will and deed,
And hopes, and joys, and shatter'd purposes
Dashes relentless on! Eternity—
The Pauseless, the Insatiate! the gulf
Whereto all motion, all existence flows,
Enters and ends. O sunshine! and cool shade,
And all that makes earth beautiful and sweet!
Soft moonlight! life's pure maidenhood, whose dreams
Are gleams of antenatal blessedness,
Witness for Earth's equality, and bid
The sister orbs of heaven cry "Hail!" to her.

MAN.

O Mother Earth! methinks I hear a voice
Sound 'mid the surging of the stars of heaven,
Like a clear trump athwart the mighty roar
Of falling waters.

" Oh thou beautiful,
" Frail daughter of Immensity! that hangest
" Upon the bosom of dim night, at once
" A glory, and a brightness, and a shame—
" That from the urn of everlasting love
" Drinkest of light and immortality,
" Like a fair child in waywardness and mirth,
" Triumphing in her loveliness; the swell
" Of thy rapt harmonies is mute in heaven,
" That once rang through the arches of all space,
" A wonder and an ecstasy; but still
" Thy path is with the glorious and pure,
" Spanning the empyrean with a jewelled zone,
" Making heaven beautiful, and with thy grace
" Charming to goodness, though thou act it not.
" Arise, O lovely fondling of the skies!
" Wake from the silence of thy fallen doom,
" Breathe forth thy sweetness to the longing air;
" The angels are about thee evermore,

" Like watchers o'er a stricken one, that hold
" A glass to catch the life-mist from her lips.
" Arise! and don thy bridal vestments pure,
" And lead the train of heaven to the morn!
" Art thou not beautiful, Daughter of Heaven?—
" Beautiful as a bride before the sun,
" Gliding along the blue serene of space,
" Pensive and glorious; showering soft light
" Upon the path of heaven, as from the eyes
" Of downward-glancing cherubim. Arise!
" Stand in the light of lights, and bare thy soul
" Unto the searching of the undimmed spheres!"

O, Spirit! are there angels hovering now
In the dim ocean of this twilight air?

SPIRIT.

There are pure angels ever round the earth,
As stars are round the azure dome of heaven,
In sunshine and in twilight and in gloom,
That with the sweetness of an unseen love
Circle humanity, and like the lark
Hid in the glory of the noonday sun,
Pour o'er the world heaven's constant tenderness.

Some in the soft-hued glimmering of dreams,
Through the unfolded lattices of sleep,
Steal to the soul in visions of delight,
Pure and benignant as the evening dew
That cools the bosom of the blushing rose.
Some all unseen, save in the blessed care,
That like a lover's arm, from life's rough way
Presses the serried thorns that choke it up;
But all as with an atmosphere of love,
And peace, and strength encircling man, alike
Within him and without, that the foul breath
Of pestilent corruption touch him not.
Some are there who have loved and suffered much
For earth, as a fond mother doth who sees
Her babe die in her bosom; who have traced
Man to the precipital brink of ruin,
With open arms to charm him back from death,
Rejected and despised; who on the scroll
Of conscience, as with words of living light,
Stamp the pure precepts of a holy lore,
That sin obliterates and sets at naught.

MAN.

Oh! how polluted must man's spirit show

In contrast with these ministers of heaven,
That e'en beneath frail woman's purity
Dims like a taper 'neath the light of day!—
Methinks if from our eyes sin's blindness fell,
And gave pure angels to our ravish'd sight,
Gliding around us clad in the bright robes
Of love and immortality, this earth
Would be like heaven. O! 'twere a blessed change,
And perfect as when Death's exulting sigh
Swoons through the empty chambers of the soul
His note of liberty.

SPIRIT.

'Tis man alone
Makes Earth less Paradise; its frame is full
Of perfect blessedness, which to the pure
Were Heaven in all its fulness; but mankind
Are crimsoned o'er with sin, which like blood-stains
A soundless ocean could not cleanse away.
And thus all flesh must thaw back to the dust
From which it sprang, as ice doth unto water,
Before the soul is purified for heaven.
Men little dream how near heaven is to them
In possibility, how far in deed.

As little as they dream amid their mirth,
Death stalks beside them; that his shadow falls
In the same mirror where the maiden sees
The image of her loveliness, and flits
Amongst the whirl of revelry and show.

SCENE. *A rock overhanging the Sea.*

MAN.

A ROCK and the wild waters! 'Tis a spot
To moralize on life, and strip the world
Of all its gaudy trappings and false gloss,
That like the daubing on a wanton's cheek,
Crimsons the paleness of disease and shame,
And with life's semblance mocks a rotten heart.

O wild, wild sea! eternal wilderness
Of strife and toil and fruitless energy!
Birthplace and Tomb! whence unto being spring
Successive myriads to run their race,
Rage, labour, and grow hoar, then pass away
With all their deeds and memories, and cede
Their petty sphere of inches to another.
O wild, wild sea! thou bosom of all passion,

And thought, and hope, and longing infinite!
That struggling ever from the riven caves,
And fathomless abysses of the Earth,
As from the cells of an awakened soul,
Fling your hoarse murmurs and aspiring groans
To the strong wingëd winds, that puff them on
In sport and in derision; that art stirred
To tumult and to madness by the breath
Of unseen currents, unsubstantial air,
That passes on, and leaves a foaming train
To wonder at the thing that angered them.
O wild, wild sea! soul of indifference!
Lashing eternally the rifted sands
And lonely shores about ye; swallowing
The wreck of man's dependence, and the life
That struggles with ye for the prize of love,
And joy, and sorrow, clinging round its soul;
That flowest on in coldness and self-aim
O'er the dissolving frames of countless waves,
That sink like generations, and so rise,
Pausing or stilling never, numb'ring up
A myriad selfish interests to make
Thy sum of being perfect. Man may read
The lore of human nature in thee, writ

Not with the pen of flattery, that gilds
The base past recognition, but all plain
And coloured only by its truthfulness;
The good and ill alike displayed, that lie
Within the sounding of its inmost soul.
O! thought might wander o'er this briny waste,
Dove-like, without one Ark whereon to rest
From the interminable ebb and flow,
As many a soul has flutter'd o'er the earth,
Weary and faint, as mine did till it found
A haven in the bosom of sweet love.

SPIRIT.

Then thou hast loved?

MAN.

Ay! so that life is bound
About by it, as by a Gordian knot,
Inseparable, until Death's sharp blade
Divide its inmost coil. There is a time
When all that sweeten'd youth and childhood dulls
And fades to nothingness, as the faint moon
Pales at the bright foreshadowing of morn,
And leaves heaven void, when every chord is dumb

That once made music in the soul, and life
Is still and silent, though it be the pause
That presages the storm and bitter strife,
Whose fury ofttimes bends the spirit down,
And strips it of its blossoms; Then to me
O'er the blank chaos of my being came,
As from the haunted chambers of deep thought,
A glorious presence—an imagined grace,
Whose footfalls as she rose pulsed thro' my heart
With tremblings exquisite. It was sweet Love,
The Blessed! the Indwelling! that doth make
A virgin firmament for its pure light,
Then at the pleading of its own deep want,
Shines forth in glory and in tenderness.

Amongst the laughing and the gay I went,
Seeking for one to realize love's dream,
As mid the countless hosts of heaven the sage
Peers for the brightness of a new-born star.
Then, soft hands trembled in my palm, and forms
Graceful and rounded with the bloom of youth,
Flitted about me in the languishment
Of music and sweet motion; voices low,
And modulate from laughter unto sadness,

Hung on the air like perfume on the wind,
And eyes, flashing, and mild, and fond, spake too,
A very Babel of soft speech, and yet—
I sighed. Life seemed to me a painted daub—all glare,
And show, and tinsel, where the eye in vain
Sought some green spot to rest on, till a mist
Swam o'er it as in gazing at the sun.

SPIRIT.

Man ofttimes palms an artificial life
Upon the heart for that which is the true,
Though to the real it be what a flower
Is to its mimicry, a tinted rag
Unsweetened by the breath of summer's love.
Joy flows alone from an *untroubled* spring,
Unstirred by the false whirl of giddy dreams,
That send the dregs of passion through its veins.

Amid that gay assemblage many wore,
Perchance, a laughing vizard o'er a heart
Empty and sad; many a vacant smile,
Like a sun-ray upon the winter's snow
That freezes yet beneath it. Some there were

Who flutter'd round its glitter, like a moth
That takes a petty rush-light for the sun;
And few who let the honest heart appear
Unveiled mid Fashion's frigid masquerade.
Didst thou look deeper than the outward guise?

MAN.

Ay! some there were so lovely, that the eye
Dreamt of them in its night, when they were gone;
But when I search'd them, like a single flower
The outer blossoms parted, and showed nought
within.

Oh! then I fled, as one whose own wild thoughts
Bid him outstrip the curbless winds of heaven,
And storm the bulwarks of sublime desire.
Want grew within me as a famine grows
With every hour that fleets unsatisfied;
But in my wanderings there rose a spot,
Where man had wrought pure nature's counsel out,
Nor reared a shrine to mock her loveliness;
Yet this I heeded not, for there was one
Who came to me on sudden with such joy
That I stirred not, but like one weak with thirst,

Let the life draught flow o'er my powerless lips.

O ! yet I see her, with those blessed eyes
Slaying my soul with beauty; eyes so deep,
That in their azure ocean of soft light
Thought shrank into a fathom length; and smiles,
Stealing their sweetness from a heaven of love,
And joy, and immortality within,
Whence all emotion, angel-like, came forth,
Clad in a vesture of celestial light.
Her face beamed on me like a glimpse of heaven
Caught in the rapture of prophetic trance,
That in all day-light thoughts, and shaded dreams,
Haunts the deep soul for ever. As she went,
Grace lapt its mantle o'er her, like the gold
On fleecy-bosomed clouds in sunny skies.
O Spirit! she was beautiful! a thing
Guileless and pure, as though her youth had past
With Heaven's own children in the light of God,
Thence come to make a paradise of earth,
And breathe the transports of transcendant bliss
Like floral exhalations through my soul.

And I—I loved her with the love of heaven,

That melts down time and space, and all between,
And clasps an essence in the soul's embrace;
And from her being there would ever flow
Full streams of holy melody, that lapt
Earth, air, and heaven, and all terrestrial forms
With charms bright as heaven's new-created light.
And as she gazed on the blue firmament,
And shrined the stars with her pure thoughts, and dreamt
Of that which lay beyond; I gazed on her,
And drew Elysian theories of Heaven,
As though borne thither by wing'd seraphims.
Oh! what is there in love that wreathes all things
With an unfading halo of sweet light,
Making the mystery of Nature clear?

SPIRIT.

Love, like the sun, clears from the soul all clouds
That darken understanding, and wrap earth
Round with a misty curtain, through whose folds
The lineaments of beauty glimmer forth
In undefined luxuriance. 'Tis a spell
That brings by sympathetic influence
The soul-deep glory from the universe.

All things are beautiful to those who love,
Whether in mind or matter. Life becomes
A pathway of soft light and radiance,
Whereon the spirit glideth unto heaven
As angels up the sunshine. Thought and deed
Are blessed in the framing and the act,
Fashioned and temper'd with pure charity,
That knits man unto man, and grants the weak
Exemption from the thraldom of the strong;—
And things inanimate, that yet are pierced
Through with the spirit of eternal love,
As with a life that circulates and glows
In ruddy currents throughout all their frame,
By gracious intuition stand revealed
In all the plenitude of Eden charms.
Then Nature's language reaches to the heart,
As through the modulations of a song
Sweet thoughts flow o'er the spirit. What was fair
Seems fairer, what was vividless grows bright.

MAN.

Ay! she made all things beautiful to me,
Drawing, with youth's pure privilege, the sting
Of guilt and wrong from life—'twas as the sun

Rose on a sphere seen but by night before.
Ah! bitter image of a transient thing,
That shineth with Promethean glory, then
Sinks 'neath the shadow of Eternity!
Oh Spirit! day by day I saw her fade,
The life within her grew more spiritual,
Triumphing in the weakness of the flesh,
And in her eyes supernal brightness shone,
As from the glory of approaching heaven.
Dear child! that kisses could not keep awake,
Or woo from the sweet love of Mother-land.
She lay within these arms, and angels came
And whispered her away with them to Heaven,
So softly, that I knew it not, but still
Murmured my heart to her. To sense she lay
Upon my breast, and yet she was in heaven;
This but the earthly mantle she had shed.
There were those silken locks that curtained her,
And her sweet lips that I had kissed but now;
From whence, as from a living spring of love,
Trickled pure heaven streams o'er my life's dull
waste.
But Oh! I kissed the soft lids from her eyes,
And knew my desolation, for the soul

That was their soul, as light is day's, no more
Stood in their dewy portals, like a queen
Swaying true-hearted multitudes. Oh heaven!
'Twas wonderful to fold her thus unto me,
With life's ripe bloom upon her cheeks, and grace
Clinging round her like a bridal robe,
Yet feel that she, the verity, the self,
Was floating, worlds-off, on the stream of souls
To God. Oh mind! 'tis ever thus with thee!
Thou graspest at material shadowings,
Whilst that the immaterial substance of all good
Flies from thee like a vapour from the wind;
So that thou hast a clod within thine hand,
Life seems eternal, till the crumbling dust
Runs through thy clenching fingers, and thy gage
Mocks thee up from the mould'ring frame of Earth.
There is no mystery like Death; it comes
Sightless as the first breath of infant life,
And goes to an unsearched Eternity—
The End and the Beginning are alike.

SPIRIT.

Death strikes upon the soul the last deep chime,
That tells it Time's short hour has passed away,

Eternity's undialled course begun;
There is a trackless ocean round this life
Whose tide is tremulous with unseen gales,
And storms that lash it off to fury—shades
Of deep chaotic darkness ever hang
Above it, like the thunder crags of heaven,
And sounds, as of the swooning of a blast
Through time-worn caverns, flap their heavy wings
On the white foam crest of the surging waves.
O man! that standest on the pinnacle
Of life's abyssmal heights with failing heart
And reeling brain, gaze on that troubled gulf—
It is thy pathway to the Better-Land,
Which thou must traverse with a sea-bird's flight,
Whose rest is on the bosom of the storm.
Ay! 'tis a fearful plunge! Now think of Death—
There is an angel merciful and strong,
Hovering ever o'er the weary world,
That foldeth in his arms the weak, whose feet
Totter upon the brink of the Inane,
And, like a mother, wafts them from Earth's strife
Into the bosom of eternal rest;
Is he not merciful who spares so long
The guilty for repentance, and the pure

Transplants in all their purity to heaven?
Death harms not aught that's lovely, that poor frame
Is mere corruption, which the soul makes fair
By luminous infusion, and the soul
Feels not Death's breathing on its healthful bloom,
But like a virgin doffs its earthly veil,
And gives its fullest beauty to the light.

MAN.

O Spirit! tell me, shall we meet again
As those who have loved well in Time; or drop
All memories of Earth with the sad dust
The soul shakes from it at the gate of heaven?
'Twere bitter to regard her angel there,
Unknown, and lost amid the myriad host
Of spirits glorified!

SPIRIT.

The soul is wrought
In an eternal mould, which still remains
Unscathed 'mid the vicissitudes of flesh;
And the same power that makes identity
'Twixt man and man, being the soul within,
That constitutes the *Self* of every man,

Bears its distinctive features when it sheds
The crysalis of frail humanity;
They who have loved on Earth will love in Heaven,
Through each the current flowing unto God,
Thence shed again in blessing on their souls,
As from clear tided springs a summer cloud
Gathers its dewy freight to yield again,
In sunny showers upon the native earth.

True Love is Earth's blest blessedness. All else,
Wealth, fame, nobility, and the poor gauds
Wherewith man trinkets out his little life,
End with the dust that rattles on his bier;
But Love, like a rich heritage, ascends
With the freed spirit to the throne of God,
There to be perfected and purified
To commune with the Children of the Light.
Therefore love much on Earth, keeping the heart
Pure from the rank pollutions of the flesh,
That like a mould'ring bank hangs loose above
To launch its filth upon each errant wave;
Let thy love circle wider with all time,
Like the light ripple round a pebble plunge,
Wider, and wider till the swells subside

In the calm fulness of Eternity.
The love of heaven flows in *one* stream to God,
As from a fountain'd unison of soul
Wherein all spirits blend inseparably;
There is no isolation but in Time,
For Death that units out mortality
Like minutes on a dial, now, will break
His arrows 'mid the ruins of the Earth,
Proclaiming *everlasting* life and love,
The consummation of all unity.

SCENE. *Hill and Dale—Morning.*

MAN.

THE breath of morn is stealing o'er my brow
All redolent of life, and health, and joy,
As the first breeze that fans the prisoner's cheeks,
And welcomes him to Liberty. The Earth
Is yet in her sweet childhood innocence,
Ere the dark cloud of worldly interests
Obscure her taintless heavens, and the blue mist,
Which is the spirit of the rising dew,
Hangs o'er it like the sadness of first love,
That makes youth beautiful. The lark is up

And singing like a disembodied soul
Within the brightness of the blessed sun,
Telling of naught but heaven and happiness;
There is no dew upon her bosom now,
For the young beams have kissed it utterly;
Yet over flower, and bud, and blade there lies
The crystal tissue, trembling with soft light,
As the young day moves gaily up the sky,
And sheds his guerdon o'er the waiting Earth.

O what a charm there is in purity,
Of morn, life, love, and nature all. This scene,
So clear and calm and peaceful, that it fills
The soul with its o'erflowing blessedness,
Pales 'neath the glare of noon, and man's rude lust,
To scarce the semblance of its former self.
But with the heart—O God! Thy richest gift
Is Innocence, that like a quenchless spring
Of everlasting light, encircles life
With beauty and unfading radiance,
Keeping all sense and feeling fresh and sweet
As the untainted breathing of the morn.

How lovely is all nature, separate

From man! There is no whispering of strife
Or sorrow here, naught to inform the soul
Of man's deep wretchedness and sin. No lust
To justify the wretch who binds his soul
In the drear darkness of a murky cell,
Scraping for gold as beasts do in the earth
For carrion, and counting life-time out
By ducats; closing house and heart alike
To the benignant sunshine. If our hearts
Could lave in Lethe's cleansing stream sometimes,
Till evil vanished from its memory,
And left a virgin tablet for the pen
Of Nature, life would be as sweet as love.

What far extremes of woe and blessedness
This earth can yield! The woe create, the joy
Begotten from a never failing womb;
Woe! fashioned out of craft, and guile, and sin,
That hungereth for prey, till, as it were,
The mother eats the babe that sucks her breast;
The joy! inherent and diffused like light
From the eternal glory of the sun,
Gather'd from all things, sight, and sound, and sense,
E'en from the very breeze that whispers us

Of yielded sweetness and unhoarded gifts.

O God! preserve my heart emancipate
From all world feelings that must die with Time,
Like things unworthy of Eternity;
Sow in my spirit seed that may spring up
And bud and increase throughout life, until
It blossom fully in the light of heaven,
Grant that the evil of the world may ne'er
Harden my heart against the sweet impress
Of Beauty, that beholding there, she see
No mirror'd image of her loveliness!

Methinks life were a curse if separate
From loving of the Good and Beautiful!
To gaze upon that azure dome, so blue
And penetrate with sunshine through and through,
As lover's eyes with fondness—the far hills,
And sun-green meadows sloping to the stream
With tints of bosky shadows, yet not feel
A motion in the spirit, like the tide
Of waving woodlands rippled by a breeze;
Better return to dust from which we sprang,
And bid the winds of heaven scatter it!

SPIRIT.

Love Beauty: let it be an atmosphere
Above thee and around, whence comes the breath
Of life and health and gladness. Yet beware
Thy love be not an ideality,
That, like the smile upon a sculptur'd lip,
Freezes upon the stone nor sheds abroad
The genial influence of a loving heart.
There is an aim still nobler than the love
Of Beauty; to show Beauty forth in *act*,
And *life*, that like some fertilizing stream
It glide flower-margined to Eternity.
Beauty quiescent loseth half its charms,
As a blue eye when sleep hath closed its lid;
But in its operation, 'tis a star
That leaves a track of glory on the sky;
Worst miser he who hoards up in his soul
The blessed wealth of Beauty and repels
Unbenison'd the weary at his gate.

There is a way to make life glorious,
And nobler than the heritage of kings,
Though thy path lie along a vale in life,

With mountain pride reared up on either side—
To make thy march triumphant, trailing not
The colours of thy Purpose in the dust—
And be received as victor into heaven..
Set Beauty in thy soul like a sea-light
To warn thee from the rocks and shoals of wrong,
And guide thee surely to thy journey's end ;
Let her pure promptings stablish in thy heart
A living spring of motive, that may flow
Through thought and action, like the veinëd life
Through man and all his members; not for praise
Let thy work be, nor gain, but heaven and right,
And for the feeling of that sweetest sense,
That from thy sowing springeth up no tare
Of grief or bitterness, but goodly fruit
That nourisheth the heart, and gives it strength
To combat manfully for life and truth ;
Look manhood in the face unblanchingly,
With no rose-coloured veil 'twixt it and thee—
With pure integrity to match the great,
And humbleness to poize thee with the small ;
Look at its guilt and shame, as on deep wounds
Wherefrom a life is flowing; seek thou then
To staunch them in thy measure ; mark its wrongs,

The burden of oppression and the toil
That grind the sand of life down till it run
Like water through the mighty glass of Time,
And let thy voice come like a trump to call
The faithful to the rescue. Find the weak,
And weary, and the desolate of heart,
Faint with the sorrows and the cares of life,
And let no act add to their bitter cup
One drop of gall, but like a priest do thou
Tell them of hope and peace, and gladden them
With that blest balm, pure kindness, which transforms,
With more than Magian art, the meanest act
Into the brightness of the summer sun!—
Doth not this quiet hour fall on thy soul
Like music dropping from the spheres?

MAN.

Ay! sooth
It is most sweet! Methinks that such a time
Were meeter far for lover's tryst than eve,
When the dark night must sadden o'er their vows,
And hide them from each other. Now, all things
Are pure and beautiful as love should be,

The dew of youth fresh on them, and though life
Should darken o'er with clouds as it roll on,
Still love would light them on, like the bright guide
Of Israel, to the promised land of rest.
'Tis beautiful, love plighted in the morn
Of life, when not a shadow dims its heaven—
Plighted for good or ill, as fate may rule,
Enduring alike true through sun and storm,
Save when the cold blast sweeps across the way,
It knits them only closer heart to heart.

SPIRIT.

Love is no faint exotic made to bloom
In the close summer of a glassy frame,
That at the first breath of the unquelled air
Shrivels up like a parchment in the flame.
No! let it stand upon the mountain's brow,
And bid the untamed winds make sport of it;
Yet though they drive it 'fore them in their might,
'Twill be like the strong eagle that exults
In the wild rapture of his headlong swoop;
The strongest and the tenderest is Love!

MAN.

Now as I gaze upon this cloudless sky,

So soft and tranquil, mem'ry paints to me
One whose life bid as fair—that my heart said
Beholding her—" O flower! so bright and sweet,
" With the pure dew of maidenhood bestrewn,
" Thy life will be unfolded like the rose,
" That leaf by leaf adds sweetness to the spring!"
She was most beautiful! but more in this,
That she moved like an angel, minist'ring
To joy and peace and charity. The weak
Rejoiced before her as the embodied smile
Of Providence, and sadden'd when she pass'd;
And yet one short, short year and she was gone,
Her heart pierced through with thorns, who ne'er had borne
The semblance of a sorrow into life.
Is there no armour against sorrow's sting?

SPIRIT.

The highway of this world is set with thorns,
O'er which poor pilgrims still must journey on;
There are who walk it shod with iron sense,
That crushes opposition like a vice,
And puts aside the ready points like twigs
Pressed backward in the woodlands by a child.

There are who seem buoyed upward by some power
Above the level of affliction's range,
Until their term be run, and then they fall
Into the bosom of the angel Death.
And there are some whose tender feet are pierced
Evermore deeper by the rugged path,
Whose softness and whose beauty nigh invite
The cruel spoiler to his unarmed prey,
As the swift hawk high poizëd in the sky,
Swoops when the dove floats past on silv'ry wings.

There is a veil upon the eyes of men,
That makes all things show dimly, but if rent
Would work like resurrection on the mind,
Bringing to life thoughts dead in doubt and error;
Thus, standing on the bridge of Time, which spans
The gulf 'twixt two eternities through which
Flows ever on the tide of human life,
That troubled stream would seem a sea of glass,
And all its thick impurities appear
Clear as the outline of a floating corpse;
Gaze down upon it though it sicken thee.

There cometh one beneath whose ermined pride

Stalks the corruption of a charnel-house,
Where fest'ring flesh lies in its cloth of gold,
E'en yet the wonder of the gaping crowd.
Upon his brow the jewelled circlet rests,
His only title to nobility;
But that, unto the vulgar, symbols still
The orbit of the everlasting sun,
That fills and glorifies a universe—of clay.
Where is the mind that should have overtopp'd,
Saul-like, the level of the multitude?
Where the bold front that in the breach of wrong
Stemm'd the fierce current of insidious foes,
Flashing Truth's falchion in the van of Time?
Shame! it hath rusted in its scabbard, till
The nerveless arm can scarce withdraw it thence.
O Earth! rejoice that at his side there comes
An undimm'd light to beacon on the world;
One who upholds the honour of his line
Unsullied as the glory of the stars;
Whose voice rings clear above the battle strife,
And shakes oppression from his iron throne;
And for the purple, round his heaving breast
Folds like a vesture manly Honesty.
Is it not glorious the light that gilds

The hoary summits of the giant hills,
Spread like the standard of eternal Truth
O'er many phalanxed Ages—blazoning
The stalwart band that barrier'd from the world
The bitter fury of Heaven's huricanes!
Onward there come a thick'ning mass who drown
Defects and vices in a shower of gold;
Who crush report, like Rome the Sabine maid,
Beneath the burden of their molten wealth,
And 'neath their gilding flaunt them in the sun
Brightly as though there were no dross within;
So the eye sees them, but search thou the soul,
And part the sterling from the counterfeit.
Oh! for the sighing of the desolate,
The widow and the orphan in their woe,
Drown'd 'neath the clink of gold wrung from their need,
Like moisture from the crushing of the grape.
Oh! for the fruitless cry of misery,
The Tantalus of stern reality,
That feebly perisheth in Famine's grasp,
Whilst plenty moulders for the lust of pride,
And adds its rottenness to the hot-bed
Of wantonness and subtle infamy.

And yet the worker wears as fair a port
As he whose life is holy Charity,
Setting his footprints on the way of life
Like sunshine rippling o'er the summer sea.
Some wear their little merit on their sleeve,
Which 'neath the friction of Time's troublous waves,
Grows threadbare as the coat of beggary.
Some under rugged lineaments enclose
Treasures of truth and goodness, that like gems
Shine through the fissures of the strong Time-quake,
Showing more perfect as affliction works,
And sorrow rends the earthy covering.
Some are there with the sight turned inwards still,
Beholding but the narrow sphere of self,
And trampling under foot the weak who stand
Betwixt them and the goal of their desire.
Blessed the few who unto fellow men
Turn with the fervent grasp of Brotherhood,
Breasting the surges of tempestuous fate,
With souls fulfilled with kindliness and Faith—
Raising the ensign of prophetic Hope
Like the clear rainbow on the thunder-cloud;
And 'mid the darkness of impending care,
Pouring the cheerful daylight of the soul!

There are sweet spirits mingling with the throng,
Marked out with sunshine, like the pouting waves
When heaven looks down in sun and shadow, hearts
So leaven'd through with grace and purity,
That though sin warp and sift them at its will,
Some hidden sweetness lingers yet to tell
The perfectness of Nature's handy-work.
Are they not as the ministers of heaven,
Liveried with beauty, and deep tenderness,
Missioned in mercy to this fallen sphere
Proclaiming peace and blessedness above;
Threading the ranks of Earth's fierce battle field,
Amid the clangour of death-darting steel,
Raising the wounded from their helplessness,
And bearing life draughts to the sinking soul!
O Mother Earth! thine arms will fondle her
When ingrate man hath drain'd her spirit dry,
Fashioned in weakness, yet in weakness strong
Where honour were the foeman, what is she
Before the onslaught of satanic serfs?—
The mirror of her purity obscured,
Polluted by lust's pestilential breath—
Pluck'd like a flower to while an hour away,
Then cast to wither on the barren ground,

Shattered and bruised beneath base passion's heel,
And all the clinging tendrils of her love
Torn bleeding from the stay round which they clung.

Look thou upon that stream, rough with the whirl
Of crime, and woe, and wretchedness, that float
Like poisoned scum upon the driving flood,
Filling the breath of life with noxious blasts
That smite humanity with pestilence.
And tremble thou, though man discern it not,
Ten thousand times more foul it shows to God;
Then praise him for the twilight of thy sense.
Yet there is much of good and fair in life,
That like the glow upon the eastern sky,
Blazons the glory of approaching day.

MAN.

O! is not life then sweetest to the soul
In utter solitude, or that deep calm
When all of Earth, its cares and interests,
Are shaken from the spirit, as the moth
Doffs from its wings the natal crysalis
And wanders through the blue serene of heaven?
In this pure scene the din of man would sound

Harsher than discord amid melody.
Here no rude tongue should whisper of the things
Poor Earth bows down to worship—fashion, wealth,
And hollow mockings gilded by a name,
That makes the calf which browses on the plain
Turn to a god when moulded in the gold.
No thought should rise, that passing into speech
Might soil the purity of new-born flowers,
Fresh with the dews of morn and paradise,
But like an angel singing through the skies,
Wing the blue empyrean of the mind,
And break in music on the thrilling sense.

SPIRIT.

Is there no music in the gentle word
That falls in consolation on the sad,
Starting the crystal tear into the eye,
Filtrate through gratitude till there remain
Naught earthy in its brightness? Though the scene
Be as a plague spot on the face of earth
Sweet Charity can cleanse it, till it shine
Bright as the jewels in a monarch's crown,
That not the midnight of Earth's blackest sin
Can dim. All beauty emanates from soul,

And all deformity. The piteous straw
Where sickness writhes in suffering and want—
The cold, bleak dwelling where the winds have will
To brag o'er man's debasement, if possess'd
In fortitude and patience, with the heart
Clear in its honour, stedfast in its faith,
Is to the eye of angels, beautiful as day;
And this fair spot with all its waken'd charms
Is purgatorial torture to the wretch
Whose life shrieks in him under conscience-stings.

Let sunshine be within thee, and without
Summer will dwell in everlasting bloom,
Whether in light or darkness, in close cell,
Or 'neath the blessed canopy of heaven.

SCENE. *A Mountain Summit—Sunrise.*

POET.

'TIS glorious to stand thus nigh to heaven,
And like a Prophet with the mark of god
Set on him for an everlasting work,
With outstretched hands, and earnest-hearted words,
To speak unto the Nations. This calm spot,

Emblem of Truth's serenity and peace,
With no hoarse dissonance to stir the deep
Of thought to passion, till the whirling waves
Swallow the love-steered purposes of soul,
And leave its being desolate—looks down
On Earth, and all its jarring multitudes,
Its miseries of soul and sense, as Earth
Looks on the distant glory of the stars,
All unparticipant of weal or woe,
Save as the glass is of its mirrored form;
Thus Action rises over Thought, and sets
Man over man prëeminent and great,
As mountains in the sphere of human life.
This were a throne meet for the Sent of God
To rest on, and give laws unto the world,
Rooted in the unshaken strength of Earth,
With man for footstool, and the disc of heaven
For canopy and witness to swell down
The quenchless words into the heart of Time;
Here to raise up the wand, and smite Earth's soul
Till streams of penitence and love gushed out
To wipe away her barrenness, and fill
The latent seeds of holiness with life,
To blossom for the harvest of the Angels.

O Thou that from Thy throne set on the flood
Of measureless Eternity, dost bind
The mighty thunder in its misty cave,
And still'st its throbbings with a single word;
That break'st the chain which holdeth it, and send'st
It booming o'er the boundless Universe,
Thy minister to testify of Thee,
And shake the pillars of the firm-set Earth
With knowledge of Thy majesty and strength;
That with the trenchant lightning dost search out
The limits of immensity, and bare
Its inmost soul to Thy dread scrutiny,
Before whose holiness the sun grows dim,
And vanishes to nothingness like mist;
That bidd'st the winds sweep o'er the bounds of space,
Strong in the terror of Thy mightiness,
Till stars are shaken from their seats, like fruit
From the autumnal fulness of the bough;
Breathe Thou upon me till my soul be full
Of deathless inspiration, that may flow
In burning currents through all space and Time,
And stir up generations with warm life,
To battle for the cause of Truth and Heaven.

Let my words ring upon the sleeper's ear
Clear as the trump that wakes the dead for doom,
Fright him from false security and sloth,
And rouse the *man* within him, though it be
Feeble and powerless as a creeping babe.
Let them break on the conscience of the base,
As billows break upon the shifting sands,
Crumbling the false foundations of his hope,
And sweeping all his theories to naught:
Let them rush swifter on him as he flees,
Circle him with their terrors everywhere,
Snatch from his clutching fingers every prop
That guilt or error flings him, till he fall
Into the waves of truth a drowning man
With not a straw to grasp at. Let them smite
Wrong and oppression like a gnawing blight,
Eating into the heart, till like dead leaves,
Shrivell'd and pow'rless, beggars tread them down.
Let them fall on the pure in heart like dews,
To strengthen and to nourish all sweet thoughts,
Raising the drooping and the weary up,
And adding sweetness to the path of life.
To all may they be wafted on the wings
Of love, not the false love that shines alike

On flower and weed, until the evil rise
To choke the good seed with its overgrowth;
But let deep kindness fill them utterly,
In comfort, or in sorrow, or in doom.

Hard is their journey, and unsmooth their way
Who walk like pilgrims to eternal fame,
Raising for ever hymns of love and beauty,
Amid the jar and weariness of life,
Working through joy and sorrow equally
To stamp their names upon the world's great heart,
And piercing their own bosoms, like the bird,
For glowing streams to nourish it for aye.
Yet it is glorious to make this life
Great in the strength of Action, till it stand
A landmark and a guide immoveable,
To witness of the struggle and the end;
A life of thought is blossom without fruit.

O Life! would I could map thy minutes out,
And give to each its purpose, like a king
To claim just tribute from futurity;
Would I could freight ye with such spirit power,
That, like a huge rock cast into the sea,

Ye sent Time waving back for evermore ;
Would ye could track your footsteps out in deeds,
Like prints in the soft sands that heaven's decree
Changeth into the adamantine rock,
Till time nor tide can wipe the trace away.
Let my steps march right onward, pausing none
For pleasure or for folly, for the path
Is long, and difficult, and hard to walk,
And at its limit lies Eternity.
Let no false weakness clog me in the work,
And cramp the motions of my willing soul,
But let me gird my spirit up to run
Before the chariot of the speeding age,
A Prophet, and a Poet, and a guide!

O! my heart thrills to that great watchword "Act,"
To leave no record written on the sand
For the first wave to crumble into naught,
But to materialize on thought—to raise
A standard glorious with the sign of heaven,
And set it waving o'er oblivion ;
To seize on spirit like a willow rod,
And bend and fashion it to perfect use,
Curbing its wayward fancies and desires,

Until it sway true to the Poet's creed;
To move Earth's multitudes with nervous power,
And burning eloquence, as leaves are swept
Before the breathing of a mighty wind,
Urging them on for Truth and Nobleness,
And leading on the van to show the way—
No prating coward framing theories
For other men to build on, with "Do *this*"
For empty precept—but there, standing forth,
Set *deeds* in the world's face, and cry "Do *thus!*"

The Poet's life is action spiritualized,
Words sublimate by earnestness and truth
To the reality and force of deed—
Falling upon the great world's soul like spells
That take the reason captive, and subdue
Its motions to the gentle sway of love.
His thoughts are like the moonlight that enshrines
All earth and heaven with beauty and soft grace,
Pouring rich floods of radiance divine
O'er life's reality of grief and pain,
Making e'en sorrow luminous and sweet,
And freighting sighs with gentlest melody.
His creed is—Love—Love perfect, uncontrolled;

Twining round all the good and beautiful,
As ivy twineth round the sapling oak,
Evermore growing with its growth more strong,
Till not e'en Death can tear those arms away;
Love—winging o'er creation like the morn
And show'ring light and beauty as it flies
O'er mountain, vale, and streamlet, equally,—
In flowery mead and desert solitude
Making itself a presence of delight,
A radiant glory sweeter than all forms,
All shows, all substance—rising in the soul,
Like water in the desert—heaven in death!
Opening the unseen gates of Heaven, till sense
Dream of its utter blessedness and peace;
Leading life onward like an angel pure,
Through strife and sorrow scatheless and secure,
Scattering joy around it evermore,
Like benisons shed from a mother's heart,
Making the weary and the bruizëd glad,
Wiping the tears from sorrow's clouded eyes,
And soothing pain like woman's tenderness.

Let me love all things with a perfect love,
That would e'en coin its own heart-drops to pay

Life's ransom from the bitterness of woe,
Bear tenderly upon the weaknesses
Of flesh, and its oft seen infirmities,
And turn with hope and trustfulness to man;
Let me not be a stunted thorn on earth,
With jaggëd points to scare all fondness off,
Unsweeten'd by a blossom or a bud,
And branded deep with harsh sterility,
But like a soft wind breathing to and fro,
May love and sympathy wave through the Earth.
Life without love, is sorrow without hope.

O Love! thou law of Heaven! thou joy of Earth!
That like the Star of Bethlehem dost rest
Above the cradle of a Poet's soul,
The witness and the seal of holy birth;
Before whose brightness all earth's shadows fade
Like fiends before the angel of the Lord;
That rend'st in twain the veil of doubt and fear
Shrouding the perfectness of heaven's pure bliss,
Till man may worship with unsmitten soul
Before the glory of the inner shrine;
O Love! the Quenchless! Pure! and Beautiful!
Be to me as the Prophet's cruize of oil,

That wasteth not, nor minisheth with use,
To nourish me through this life's famine time,
And strengthen me unto the poet's work;
Fold my soul throughly in thy sweet embrace,
In honour, or in sorrow, or in joy,
Filling it with thy holy influence,
As air is filled with sunshine at the noon,
Till all thought feel its blessedness and peace.
Thus would I furnish me for life's long march,
Arm for its dangers, cater for its wants,
Work out its ends with confidence and truth,
And rest unstained, unwearied at the goal!

ALCESTÉ.

I.

BEAUTIFUL Florence! e'en thy very name
Falls on the ear with a strange magic spell,
As though upon the wings of Time there came
A breathing of sweet chances that befell
In days of old, all chronicled by Fame,
Whose faintest whisper makes the bosom swell
With kindred feeling, as a sea-flower waves
Concordant to the tale the ripple laves.

II.

Thou art entwinëd with all lovely things
That bind a rosy chaplet round the earth;
The life of Poets, whose sweet utterings
Have the soft cadence of an angel's mirth;
The springs of genius—high imaginings
That are the wealth of ages, and the birth
Of Art, beneath whose vivifying wand
The stone, the canvas, animated, stand.

III.

Thy very dust is hallowed, and we tread
The footsteps of the mighty, meeting ever
The prized memorials of the Living Dead,
Those whose sublimëd spirits, waning never,
Hover around the struggling world and shed
Their blessings o'er it, which nor time can sever,
Nor can oblivion crush, but which endure
Strong in their greatness, in their truth secure.

IV.

Would that some faint ray of the heavenly light
Shower'd on thy children now might rest on me,
Illume my twilight thoughts and grant me sight
Into the depths of Nature's poesie;
And tune my faltering tones to breathe aright
That which my heart so fondly feels of thee,
For 'twere a music sweet as heaven's own lays,
Could love's deep soul be cadenced in thy praise.

V.

There was a garden sloping to the west,
Smooth'd downward from the giant Apennines,
The serried outlines of whose hoary crest
Blent with the distant heavens in mystic lines,
At eventide with golden splendours drest,
When the red sun its farewell greeting shines;
A palace topped it, from whose terraced height
Wound a broad stair of marble, snowy white.

VI.

And paths went wandering beneath the sweep
Of Orange boughs and trelliced vines, whose leaves
Gave in their parting many a transient peep
Of the blue sky, as through soft-tinted eaves;
And oft they led to arbours shaded deep,
As are the nooks the midway forest weaves,
And carven forms of nymphs and dryads gleamed
Through leafy screens, as though a Poet dreamed.

VII.

A fountain rippled in the midst, and threw
Coolness into the sky; the sculptor's thought
A quaint conceit—Aurora flinging dew
Upon the earth—the marble finely wrought,
Till through the Iris-tinted drops it grew
Warm with existence, all its fair limbs fraught
With grace and motion—'twas a thing so human,
The heart forgot the goddess in the woman.

VIII.

Beside the marge of this fair fountain stood
A maiden trancëd with its melting sound,
For rillet murmurs are to pensive mood
Sweet as the rain-drops to the thirsty ground.
Alas! that youth so soon should feel the rude
And merciless stinging of cold sorrow's wound,
That Nature's sweetest melodies should gain
The heart's full rapture through the ear of pain.

IX.

She was a maiden, in whose gentle mien
The spirit mirror'd all its fairest hues,
As on the undimm'd summer sky serene
The noonday sun its golden splendour strews;
Her deep blue eye o'erflowed with tender sheen,
Like sadness through whose frame soft smiles infuse,
Whilst on her lip expression rippling lay,
And limned in silence what the soul would say.

X.

Her's was a beauty vivified by grace,
That made each motion music to the eye,
Beam'd from the sunny sweetness of her face,
And tuned her accents all so tenderly,
That when Alcesté spake the heart could trace
A woman's spirit full of motions high,
And kind, and noble, and whose inward bent
Sway'd to all courses pure and innocent.

XI.

There were full many suitors who had sigh'd
Their amorous orisons before her shrine,
And with the flutter of a doublet vied
To win the smile they toasted o'er their wine;
There were full many who with blinded pride,
Deem'd that a title could the scale incline,
And flung their lordships, gauntlet-fashion, down,
Daring a Cæsar to refuse a crown.

XII.

But there was one who loved for love's own sake,
And treasured its dear sweetness in his breast,
Whose spirit thrill'd within him when she spake,
And bowed before her as the flower down-prest
By her light step, and who could ever make
A long day happy and a midnight blest
With brooding on a word, a smile, a glance,
That haply served to sun love's young romance.

XIII.

They had been playmates in gay childhood's days,
When hearts are open as a summer flower,
And love had wound them slowly in his maze,
And knit them close ere yet they felt his power.
But once a-wandering by green-shaded ways,
The silence drew their souls out, and that hour,
Hand clasped in hand, and lip to lip united,
Their pure young vows of constant love they plighted.

XIV.

What spirit fused into the blossom'd spray,
And wreathed about them in its waving scent?
What angel echoes tuned the thrushes lay,
And gave the tones such sudden ravishment?
For sure they ne'er were sweet as on that day,
Nor with such magic to the spirit went;
If it was love, then love is wondrous sweet,
The point of life where Earth and Heaven meet.

XV.

Yet Love but drew the summer clouds away
That curtain'd heaven from their raptured eyes;
Still from attainment spread an ocean wide,
And bade them pause in sight of paradise:
Her father sternly his fond suit denied,
Nor soften'd to his prayers, nor heard his sighs;
So Julian shrined her image in his soul,
Till happier fortune brought them sweeter dole.

XVI.

Now at Verona sojourn'd he a space,
Dreaming of her, as he must everywhere;
Unconscious of the woes that grew apace,
And soon might drive his spirit to despair;
Unconscious that his love in grief's embrace
Cradled her panting soul, nigh dead with care,
And wept at noontide, wept at dewy eve,
Till e'en the light that saw her seem'd to grieve.

XVII.

There was a suitor, who with crooked frame
Crawled in the race for beauty; thither prest,
Not 'fore the gaze of heaven, but as in shame
Hid he the purpose in his own dark breast,
And serpented his motions to his aim,
Like one who stabs a victim in his rest;
For still the heart must feel in its calm time,
That to crush love's true spirit is a crime.

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XVIII.

One midnight gather'd round the fatal board
Where wealth's death rattle echoes in the dice,
Her sire, Amieri, with some others pored
In full abstraction of the cursëd vice.
Each golden piece raked from his precious hoard,
Froze the vext heart-pulse of the wretch like ice.
There was no sound save the cold ring of gold,
That broke the stillness as a knell had toll'd.

XIX.

Amieri staked, and lost, and staked again,
Drawn, fascinated, to his ruin fast,
Imploring fortune to his aid in vain,
Till, desperate, he staked all on one cast,
And lost—was ruined—and fell down as slain,
Life, fortune, seeming at a moment past,
Like gambling pledges raked from Earth's rich hoard
By Death's strong hand, whose gains are ne'er
restored.

XX.

Better if he had staked upon a throw
His honour and his daughter openly,
And thus like some fell fiend at one swift blow
Sunk all he loved in utter misery,
Than yielding unto calculation slow,
Consent to blast them, and a witness be
While sorrow sapped the vigour of her frame,
And with her weakness stronger grew his shame;

XXI.

For in the morning the betrayer rose,
The crippled Pietro, the false lover, and
With honied phrases, and well studied shows,
Sought from Amieri poor Alcesté's hand,
Whilst for his "intercession" he bestows
Full restitution of his wealth and land;
Fortune and Honour, fronted, held the field—
Ah! poor Alcesté, why did honour yield!

XXII.

Amieri humbled like a guilty thing
Beneath shame's level, tremblingly agreed,
And sought by torture of the mind to wring
Her sad consent to save him in his need,
Falsehood and art together minist'ring,
To soften her weak heart, and gild the deed;
By prayers he moved her, and by childish tears,
And fann'd into fierce flame her woman's fears,

XXIII.

Till she, poor fluttering dove, mesh'd in the net,
Panted with bitter anguish and dismay,
By love and fear so grievously beset,
That each would draw her on a diff'rent way.
Her tears at night the sleepless pillow wet,
And coursed along her pallid cheeks by day,
Making life weary, sad, and full of woe,
Her hopes of bliss and rapture shatter'd so.

XXIV.

When did a woman's spirit true and sweet,
E'er close its issues against pity's cry,
E'er hold the field for self without defeat,
Nor yield to prayer, though yielding were to die!
And so she trembled to this calm retreat,
To weep her bitter doom forth silently,
Where in the sadness of the fountain's tone,
She heard a gentle echo of her own.

XXV.

A feeble step trail'd o'er the gravell'd way,
At which she thrill'd and turned in sudden fright,
Whilst in her eyes there shot a fitful ray,
That scorched the tears up with its flashing light.
He was a weak old man, and time's decay
Stood on his brow and thin locks snowy white,
And trembling hands that shook upon his staff,
As though, alive, they wrote their epitaph.

XXVI.

Slowly he came, reading with anxious eyes
The thoughts that flicker'd on Alcesté's mien,
Veiling dishonour under Virtue's guise,
And avarice as though 'twere sorrow keen;
And still 'mid tears, and groans, and piping sighs,
He querulled forth his plaints the space between,
" Must thy poor father beg so near the grave,
" Be not so cruel—O ! my daughter—save ! "

XXVII.

" Sir ! " softly said she, while the colour fled
From her smooth cheeks till they grew ashy pale,
" Cast off your mourning features—I will wed
" Though Death should be the bridegroom, and not quail;
" The sorrows of our house be on my head;
" What though a woman's—'tis no novel tale,—
" Within her *weakness* does my comfort lie,
" For if the storm be sore, the *flower* will die.

XXVIII.

" Think not, sir," she said on with noble scorn,
" This husband of your choosing loses aught
" In that the world doth know him basely born,
" And with a shrine that fits the inner thought;
" Think not a silly woman's heart will mourn
" A shape in Nature's merry moments wrought,
" Or weep the finding of each broad defect,
" Or wish the form less wry or more erect.

XXIX.

" No! sir! each twisted joint will be my pride,
" The blazon of my fortunes to the crowd,
" Till envy shall pursue the happy bride
" Sworn to a lord with graces so endowed;
" And fame shall bear his virtues far and wide,
" And trumpet them unto the world aloud;
" Then let them say—' Ah! she is over-bought;
" ' He is a jewel rare, and she is naught'!

XXX.

" But, sir, although I would not have men hold
" My love won by his merits or his charms,
" This tongue shall ne'er the bitter truth unfold,
" Though falsehood soil me with its sneering harms;
" 'Tis meet to *you* the secret should be told,
" But henceforth a stern law my grief disarms;
" Pray heaven, sir, that your conscience may be
dumb,
" And his, as my lips for the time to come!"

XXXI.

Thus far her woman's indignation ran,
Roused into conflict by the cruel wrong,
Standing erect before that crouching man,
Weak in his shame—she in her virtue strong;
Whilst on her quivering lips and cheeks so wan,
Reproach and scorn alternate coursed along—
But to her heart the silence went, and then
She swept past in her gentleness again,

XXXII.

The tresses rustling on her neck, and she
A woman meek and tender as a dove,
Yet to her full heart stricken utterly ;
And as she went, her moist eyes turn'd above,
Sighing, " Poor Julian, heaven have care of thee,
" And grant thee mercy for thy hapless love ! "
She said no more, but 'twas a piteous thing
To see a helpless maid so sorrowing.

XXXIII.

She wept her tears full out, for on the day
That was to make her bride, the lids were bare ;
And such cold sternness on her lips did stay,
It seemed as though a smile had ne'er been there.
They clad her graceful form in white array,
And twined sweet blossoms with her golden hair,
And made her lovely who must still be so
E'en 'mid despair, and tears, and cruel woe.

XXXIV.

He darken'd by her side with honied smile,
And fawning courtesy, and limping stride,
Showing to those who knew the heart, more vile
The baseness that his gilding sought to hide;
But she went on unmoved, and stood the while
Still as a marble statue at his side;
Certes, a terror o'er the spirit crept,
It had been mercy had the lady wept.

XXXV.

Julian heard it, and with passion burning
Sped he to Florence—to the spoiler's den,
Knock'd at the portals, and the lacqueys spurning,
Rush'd into presence of the guilty men,
Father and husband from the church returning,
Alcesté standing by them—paler then,
She thrill'd as though she would have fled to him,
Then calm'd again to stone in every limb.

XXXVI.

He said—" Alcesté !"—he said nothing more,
But gazed a space into her melting eyes
So woefully, her poor heart flutter'd sore,
Like a caged lark that thrills to mount the skies.
He said, " Is this the bliss we pictured o'er ?
" Is this the rapture, this the Paradise ?
" O perjured vows ! O cruel love !" he said,
" Thus at a blow to strike hope's spirit dead."

XXXVII.

He said, " Shame on a venal love like thine,
" That barters truth for every gilded toy ;
" Shame on the heart that kneels at mammon's
shrine,
" There calmly immolates another's joy ;
" Shame on the tongue that breathes in tones divine
" Sweet vows, that on the fond soul never cloy,
" Then with their echoes faded scarce away,
" The victim of their magic can betray !"

XXXVIII.

" Shame on thee, false Alcesté, most of all;
" Shame on thy gentle face, so frank and fair;
" Shame on thy tender eyes, whose light did fall
" Softly upon the soul, like blessings there;
" Shame on thy voice, so low and musical;
" Shame on the clusters of thy golden hair;
" Shame on them that make thee so bright and sweet,
" Yet but an angel-temple for deceit!"

XXXIX.

She stood stone still, and answer'd ne'er a word,
Though sore the taunts went stabbing through her breast;
But her heart beat till it could nigh be heard,
Amid the silence of her breath supprest,
And through her frame a fitful tremor stirr'd,
Like a bowed willow trembling in its rest.
And then he turn'd him to the speechless twain,
With looks of bitter anger and disdain.

XL.

" Sirs! Ye are noble warriors in good sooth,
" With bearing worthy of so fair a cause;
" Spoilers of love, and constancy, and truth,
" And laurelled by a sordid world's applause!
" Curses upon ye and your gilded ruth,
" Whom pity nor remorse could ever pause;
" Curses upon ye, deep as your own shame,
" Deep as your fiendish hearts themselves could
frame."

XLI.

Again he turned to her with softened feeling,
" Dear shattered idol of this heart" he cried,
" I cannot curse *thee*, e'en thou art sealing
" The cruel doom that bans me from thy side.
" No! No! a blessing from my soul is stealing,
" Nerved by a power that will not be denied,
" So be thou blessëd, charm'd against all evil,
" An angel still, though wedded to a devil."

XLII.

She answer'd ne'er a word, but stood stone still,
Fetter'd as 'twere within some horrid trance,
Alive to torture and to deadly ill,
Yet powerless of a word, a sigh, a glance;
But when he fled at last, a mortal thrill
Shot cold and icy through her like a lance,
And down she swoon'd, without a word or tear;
It made those guilty men grow pale with fear.

XLIII.

They bore her, stirless, to her snowy nest,
Stirless, they laid her there as cold as lead,
All in her stainless bridal garments drest,
With fragrant blossoms circled round her head.
They laid their hands upon her dewy breast,
And trembled back as those who touch the dead;
They wiped the dew from off her clammy brow,
And shudder'd, 'twas so cold and passive now.

XLIV.

Vainly they pierced the fair and rounded arm,
No crimson stream gush'd o'er its spotless snow;
Vainly they sought the frozen heart to warm,
And bid its chill'd and torpid currents flow;
Vainly they practised every learnëd charm
To call into the veins life's ruddy glow;
Stirless, they laid her on that bridal bed,
Stirless, she lay, all life and motion fled.

XLV.

The life-long night they watched and laboured there,
With fearful whispers pulsing on the ear,
The trembling women gasping many a prayer,
Wrung by a rustle, freighted up with fear,
Till morning came, and with it came despair,
So still she lay, so icy cold and sere;
And silently and slow they crept away,
With bated breath as though she slumb'ring lay.

XLVI.

They 'lumed pale torches at her moveless feet,
That flung grey shadows round the ghostly room,
And ofttimes misty clouds of incense sweet
Went wreathing upward through the death-like
gloom;
There was no sound, not e'en a faint heart-beat,
But all was silent as it were Death's tomb,
And from without the breezes as they drave,
Sigh'd low and sad like mourners o'er a grave.

XLVII.

The maiden lay there beautiful and pure,
As one that slept and sunn'd her soul in heaven,
From every chance of grief and pain secure,
Sublimed from every taint of earthly leaven;
Her placid bosom through white vestiture
Shone soft and holy, that poor breast so riven,
And her small hands prest gently as in prayer,
Breath'd from the Earth to Heaven, and ended there.

XLVIII.

They came with stilly tread and panting breath,
And softly laid her on the narrow bier,
A lovely sleeper in the arms of death,
Unruffled by a dream or chilly fear,
As some fair child that sweetly slumbereth
Upon the bosom of her mother dear.
They bore the dead forth over flowers to rest,
Whose living feet on cruel thorns had prest.

XLIX.

He, crooked though in frame, in spirit more,
Went by her now as erst he did in life,
A slayer, watching whilst they slowly bore
The helpless victim of his unseen knife;
And sorrow for a mask he broadly wore,
To cloak the guilt that in his heart was rife.
Woe to thee, base heart, from the lids that weep!
Woe to thee, base heart, from the eyes that sleep!

L.

There was a vault within whose stifling maw
Lay many a scion of Amieri's race,
Crumbling to dust beneath Death's sapping thaw,
That still melts down mortality apace;
And round the fastness distillations raw
Moulder'd the stones with damp and hideous trace;
And here they laid her beautiful and pure,
From every chance of grief and pain secure.

LI.

Close in their cold and narrow coffins pent,
Around her lay ancestral ashes heaped,
That through the dank and clammy darkness sent
Currents in foul and noxious vapours steeped;
And loudly through the gloomy stillness went
The oozy plashes from the roof that dripped,
Marking the minutes as they slid away,
With slimy tokens of the frame's decay.

LII.

The rank air slumber'd deep on midnight wings,
Dead as the dead that fester'd 'neath its shade,
Hush'd from those low and fearful whisperings,
That make the living pallid and afraid,
Till nigh amid its awful shadowings,
The cerements silver'd round the hapless maid,
As might a lucent gem with radiance glow,
Caught from the brightness of the soul below.

LIII.

Soh! 'tis a sigh—low drawn and very faint,
A spirit stirring 'mid the slumb'ring dead,
Bodiless, homeless, breathing forth its plaint,
Nor yet from life and its sad memories fled.
Soh! it comes swooning through the air so taint
Acute and clear as ever arrow sped;
Ah! miserere for the hapless soul,
That from the shores of death thus wafts its dole.

LIV.

Soh! the soft raising of a white clad arm—
Are holy angels bearing her away?
Ave Maria! shield thy child from harm,
And guard her from this mansion of decay!
Soh! how the lady trembles with alarm,
How wildly round the cave her glances stray,
Until amid the torpid gloom they die
Of space deep darken'd to immensity.

LV.

With frenzied strength from off her naked feet,
She tore the linen fetters they had bound,
And mantled closely in white winding sheet,
The maiden slid upon the icy ground;
With tottering steps that terror rendered fleet,
And trembling hands she traced the vault around,
Stumbling o'er rotten shells whose prison'd bones
Rattled beneath her touch with hollow groans.

LVI.

Her palm grew clammy with the slimy ooze
That fester'd on the walls in sick'ning streams,
As on the pallid brow Death's icy dews
Gather, the presage of corruption's seams ;
Pale horror every sound and motion glues,
So corpse-like all around the dungeon seems;
But on—and a low portal met her hand,
By iron staunchions in quaint tracings spann'd.

LVII.

And so escaping from her death-like swoon,
Forth sped she to the clear and healthful air,
Fearing her shadow which the orbëd moon
Flung darkly on the moss-enwoven stair ;
And her white feet, used to the silken shoon,
Chilled 'neath the stone so comfortless and bare,
Falling unechoed as she sped away,
Wing'd with the strength of wonder and dismay.

LVIII.

Amid her loosen'd hair the night-breeze play'd,
And sent it waving wildly o'er her breast,
Until the snowy lawn with golden braid
In soft and waving traceries seemed drest.
And as she sped along a muffled shade
Still at her side o'er tombs and grasses prest,
As though insatiate Death in discontent
Pursuing his escapëd victim went.

LIX.

Ah! whither shall she flee, poor hapless thing,
To find a rest more blissful than the grave,
For what sweet haven spread her weary wing,
To nestle from the foam of sorrow's wave?
The midnight winds are sadly whispering,
And coldly on her beating temples lave;
Yes!—on—an iron law is in her soul,
Peace! trembling heart, brave not its stern controul.

LX.

Weary and trembling tarried she at last
Before her bridal home, with fitful cries,
Till on the crooked Pietro limping past
The buried voice in trembling accents sighs.
The portal opens—but the wretch, aghast,
Before that white-draped phantom, livid, flies
As slayer 'fore his risen victim might,
Smitten with guilty terror at the sight.

LXI.

Woe to thee, coward, in thy secret places!
Woe to thee in the daylight haunts of men!
Cold terror wrap thee in his close embraces,
And bear thee shrieking to his haunted den.
Circle thy midnight couch with vengeful faces,
And conscience torture beyond mortal ken;
Ave Maria! blessings on the maid
All in the moonlight at thy portal laid.

LXII.

Vainly she calls for help in fainting tones,
Only the watchful echoes heed the sound,
Respondless bearing on her hapless moans,
Fainter and fainter o'er the moonlit ground—
On—on—she hurries o'er the flinty stones,
Like spirit on some dreadful mission bound;
And from that guilty threshold as she stept,
The grave clothes off her trembling footprints
swept.

LXIII.

She sank nigh dead with weariness and fear
Before the dwelling of her early youth,
Breathing forth saddest sighs which but to hear
Might melt the heart with tenderness and ruth.
She lay there like a bud which tempests drear
Nip in its spring time with remorseless tooth;
Ah! sure a father's heart will tender be,
Nor close its issues 'gainst her utterly.

LXIV.

Amieri wander'd through his gloomy halls
With restless steps and vacant rolling eyne,
Whilst from each wide spread casement down there falls
Upon his blanchëd locks the moon's pale sheen,
As though a voice within him ever calls,
And bids him follow some old form unseen;
She lies upon your threshold, weak old man—
Up! take her to your arms while yet you can!

LXV.

Faint sighs come to him on the sleep-hush'd air,
That swell to thunder in his timid breast,
Rooted he gazes out with glazëd stare
At his poor murder'd child in grave clothes drest;
" My Father!". cried she in her chill despair,
With palms together in mute anguish prest—
" Hence! hence! avenging spirit, haunt me not!"
He cried, then totter'd from the fearful spot.

LXVI.

She rose and fled in terror through the night,
All witless whither her weak steps might stray,
As some freed bird first wings its rapid flight
From its close prison to the realms of day;
But on a sudden beam'd an inward light
Upon her troubled soul and bid her stay,
With the warm blood sent swiftly to her cheeks,
The trace that signals when the fond heart speaks.

LXVII.

She thought of Julian—he so kind and true,
And how they gladden'd in the times gone by;
She thought how he had stolen her love's young dew,
And fused into her heart so tenderly,
Until beneath affection's power, they grew
Together knit in one sweet unity;
And now poor maid, by kith and kin forsaken,
Unto *his* heart she felt she would be taken.

LXVIII.

O blessed power of Love! that still can keep
A quiet haven for the weary soul,
When o'er the sea of life grief-tempests sweep,
And surging billows o'er contentment roll;
And thither though Affliction's cloud be deep
The heart steers true beneath its sweet controul!
To him, the loved, the lost, thus basely spurned,
She fled a prisoner from Death's chains return'd.

LXIX.

Sigh for the heart that follows to the grave
The perish'd idol of its summer dreams!
Sigh for the heart that powerless all to save,
Sees its sweet treasure gulph'd in sorrow's streams;
And joys that ivy-like around it clave,
Nipp'd of their blossoms, shorn of their warm beams!
So Julian follow'd from afar her bier,
With many a sigh, with many a bitter tear.

LXX.

Within the stillness of his chamber, he
Open'd the flood-gates of his chill despair,
Darkening the midnight with deep misery,
Freighting the moments all with heavy care,
Weeping for her he loved so utterly,
Whose presence only made existence fair,
His pallid face sunk in the outspread palms,
Moist with the dew that her dear loss embalms.

LXXI.

Soft through the lattice steals a gentle voice,
Breathing his name in accents faint and weak,
Tones that in past days made his soul rejoice,
And now send crimson currents to his cheek.
" Dear vision," said he, " of long cherish'd joys!
" That now so sweetly in my soul dost speak,
" Fade not away, but like a fixëd star,
" Shine on my spirit from thy heavens afar.

LXXII.

" Oh! thou art lovely in thy radiant sphere,
" As thou wert once, the day-star of my heart,
" Revealing ever shadowless and clear
" The blessed rays that in thy spirit start.
" O light! O life! O angels hovering near!
" Pity us, sunder'd thus so far apart."
Upon her love the maid imploring cries—
Awaken, Julian, or thy loved one dies!

LXXIII.

He rose, and to the lattice trancëd went,
Where through the opened eaves the moonlight fell,
And to his tearful glances downward bent,
Show'd that dear form, loved and remember'd well.
Gazed he in fond and loving wonderment,
As one who slumbers under Fancy's spell,
On his beloved in cerements snowy white,
All in the moonrays pictured there so bright.

LXXIV.

" Dream of my soul ! " he said, " thus softly stealing
" From thine empyrean o'er my aching sense,
" Pouring thy balm on my pierced heart, and healing
" Cold sorrow's wounds with ravishment intense;
" Fold still thy wings, and thus in light revealing
" Thine angel charms, flee ne'er away from hence."
Still on his name she call'd with swooning sighs,
And hands convulsive prest, and upturn'd eyes.

LXXV.

" It is my love," he said, " by death set free
" From cruel bonds that sever'd our true vows,
" Thus from the piteous tomb return'd to me,
" In white array with blossoms on her brows.
" Ah ! blessed is love's immortality,
" That e'en the grave with softest charms endows;
" And blessed thou, mine own, alive or dead,
" That to this yearning heart once more hast fled,

LXXVI.

Entrancëd still he wander'd to the gate,
Where stood Alcesté in sad weary plight,
Sore press'd with sentience of her hapless fate,
Weeping, nigh hopeless, in the pale moonlight.
Tarried he there in strange delicious strait,
Lapt in the wonder of his dreaming sight;
Then opening wide his arms in raptured prayer,
Her gentle spirit swoon'd and nestled there.

LXXVII.

O Paradise! to waken from a dream,
A sleep-revealment of delights, and find
The rosy fancies, beauteous though they seem,
Reality, and in our fond arms twined;
Truth haloed by imagination's beam,
And heaven and earth in one sweet birth combined.
Thus Julian gazed upon her fainting form,
Robed for the grave yet with existence warm.

LXXVIII.

He bore her as a mother bears a child
Within the cradle of her tender breast,
His throbbing heart, 'twixt hope and fear nigh wild,
With that dear lifeless form against it prest,
Like some bright angel beautiful and mild,
Sunk in the calmness of Elysian rest.
Upon her lips he breath'd his soul away,
Whilst she in stilly swoon Joy's prisoner lay.

LXXIX.

Slowly she oped her silken-lidded eyes,
As night steals from the virgin blue of morn;
Gazing on him she loved, in sweet surprise,
Thus tenderly within his bosom borne;
Whilst clouded Memory through old time flies,
Sinking where she from that dear breast was torn.
Ah! blessed future never snatch her thence,
But sun the visions of her innocence.

LXXX.

Report ran through the city that the maid
Ransom'd from Death's cold grasp had happily been,
And, in the moonlight, no unhousell'd shade
Those fearful, conscience-stricken men had seen;
Till they in day-born confidence array'd,
Followed in quest, like blood-hounds swift and keen,
Tracking love's footsteps out with cruel art,
To its sweet resting place within the heart.

LXXXI.

They came to Julian, and with honied guise
Flatter'd him to restore the risen maid;
Seek ye to charm the eagle of his prize,
Within his eyrie on the mountain laid;
But Love, more strong, all sapping art defies,
Nor ever from its fixëd trust is sway'd!
They came with arms, they came with vengeful
threats,
Poor fluttering dove! what danger thee besets.

LXXXII.

Before the Father of the Church they went
With humble suit, with supplications strong,
Revenge and lust confirming their intent,
And like foul magic drawing them along.
Ave Maria! save the innocent,
Nor let firm judgment minister to wrong,
Warping the tenor of the righteous laws,
To aid oppression and a hollow cause.

LXXXIII.

It was decreed that she who thus had been
Parted from all earth's cares and sympathies,
Wafted by prayer into a fairer scene,
As one who in pure penitency dies,
Thence drew new birthright from that air serène
To ransom her from antenatal ties.
Rejoice, Alcesté, twice from Death thou'rt free!
Rejoice, O Julian! life is brought to thee.

LXXXIV.

Sweet are the joys that follow on despair,
Like sunrays kissing noontide mists away,
Leaving the unveil'd summer skies more fair
For the deep shades that on their brightness lay.
And love's sweet firmament dispell'd of care,
Rivals the glories of its early day,
Sunning their progress down life's troubled stream,
Wrapt in each other, pillow'd in a dream.

PYGMALION.

PART I.

The Man.

IN the blue Ægean is Cyprus,
Set in the midst of the waters
Like a starry isle in the ocean of heaven.
The waters ripple around it
With soft and luminous motion,
Strewing the silvery sands
With shells amaranthine, and flowers
Borne from amid the white coral stems,
Like off'rings of peace from the ocean.

Amid it riseth Olympus,*
Stately and grand as the throne of the gods,
And the island sleeps 'neath its shadow

* The principal mountain of Cyprus was thus named.

Like a fair babe 'neath the care of its father.
Streams clear as the diamond
Evermore wander around it,
Like the vein'd tide through our members,
Quick with the blessings of beauty,
And health and verdurous pleasure,
Filling with yellow sheaves
And plenty the bosom of Ceres;
Calling forth flowers from the slumbering Earth,
Like thoughts from the dream of a Poet,
Till the island throughout is a garden,
The child and the plaything of summer.

In luscious clusters the fruit hangs
In the sunshine, melting away
From sweetness to sweetness.
The grapes clust'ring 'mid leaves,
That give their bright hue to the eye
Like the setting of rubies.
The nectarines and the pomegranates
Glowing with crimson ripeness,
And the orange trees with their blossoms
Yielding sweet odour to every breeze,
As the incense flows from the censer.

The air is languid with pleasure and love,
Lulling the sense to dreams Elysian,
Making life seem a glorious trance,
Full of bright visions of heaven,
Safe from the touch of reality,
Toil none—woe none—pain,
Wild and illusive as sleep-revelations.
Time to be poured like wine from a chalice
Sparkling and joyous for aye,
Drained amid mirth and music,
The brows circled with ivy,
And the goblet at last like a gift
Thrust in the bosom of slumber.

Thus are the people of Cyprus;
Young men and old making holiday,
Decking them daintily forth
In robes of Sidonian purple:
The maidens all beauteous but wanton,
Foolishly flinging youth's gifts,
Its jewels—its richest adornment,
Like dross on the altar of pleasure;
Letting the worm of mortality
Eat out their hearts till they bear
Only the semblance of angels.

Amongst them like a gaunt and gnarlëd oak
Waving majestic o'er a pigmy race,
Pygmalion was; for by the mete of soul
Man ranges in the phalanx of his age.
His heart was like an ocean, tremulous
With radiant aspirations and high thoughts
That fretted ever on mortality,
Wearing life out with passion and desire,
Struggling against the limits of the flesh,
The bonds and shackles of the Possible,
That bound him, like Prometheus, to the dust,
And clogg'd the upward winging of his soul.
He walk'd 'mongst men like one who felt the strength
Of nobler nature swelling in his breast,
Eternal breathings fanning the Divine
Within him into flame and utterance.
He spake not much, for that his heaving thoughts
Yearn'd vainly for the living fire of heaven
To burn them through the soul-core of the Time;
But in the inner man the tumult sped
In burning currents, like the ruddy streams
From every pulse-beat of his o'er-fraught heart.
His soul hung in an atmosphere of grace,

And beauty, midway betwixt earth and heaven,
Revolving, like the moon through azure space,
Mid starry fancies and faint orbëd dreams,
That made bright land-marks in the spirit's flight.
Faint glimmerings of loveliness untold
Flash'd ever on him in his solitudes,
Luring him on to search and far pursuit
Through empyrean altitudes of thought,
Sped onward by the god-like thirst to grasp
The spiritual, and with creative hand
Mould it to corporal reality.
Love was his guiding star—his bright ideal
Shining above all visions and all dreams,
As doth the Pole-star o'er the icy North;
Love in its broad and fineless empery
Ruling, directing all by right divine,
Pressing its seal of vassalage on thought,
And crushing passion with relentless heel;
Love—the refiner, whose alchymic art
Transmuteth very dross to purest gold,
Passing emotion through the furnace heat
That scorcheth up its perishable frame,
And yields the essence purified for Act.

The soul that wanders like the mission'd dove
Along the chaos waste of boundless thought,
Must have some ark to nestle in on Earth,
And shelter from the endless Undefined.
So to Eve's daughters would Pygmalion seek,
Won by sweet hopes and promises of good
And beauty, such as emblem'd to him still
The end accomplish'd of aspiring thirst—
Essence and grace materialized. In them
He saw the sum of Nature's perfectness,
The acmè of idealism reach'd:
Fair forms, smooth with the ruddy glow of health,
And ripening time, whose every motion seemed
The wak'ning of ethereal gracefulness
To life, and on whose lineaments the light
Of a seraphic imagery play'd;
Forms lithe and rounded by the art of youth
To be the shrines of spirit excellence,
And hold the fusion of immortal grace
Unblemish'd by corporeal defect.
What found he then? Flower-wreathëd chalices
Tinted with rosy dyes, bright elegance
Of shape and garniture, but brimming up
Draughts bitter to the taste and nauseous.

He gazed upon their beauty, which his soul
In thought had dower'd with purity and truth,
As from the inward reflex of itself;
But gazing, all his visions pass'd away,
And cold reality rose death-like up
To mow the aureate blossoms from his soul.

In Amathus the chill grey morning dawn'd
That woke him to truth's ruggedness, and left
Life struggling, joyless, sunless, to its goal.
Woman stood forth before him beautiful,
But mocking heaven with a shameless brow,
Wearing foul lewdness like a victor's crown,
And dashing virtue's elixir away.
From the deep fountains of her eyes there flow'd
No lucid streams of holiness and love,
But lust and utter wantonness, that fill'd
The heart with loathing, fraught with death to
Hope.
Her crimson lips shed forth no silvery strains
Of gentleness and peace to hymn life's bark
Across the heaving waters of this Time,
But folly and discordant revelry
Sounded around her evermore, and woo'd

To sin and shame with notes once toned for heaven.
No Priestess she of lovely innocence,
Stoled for the work with beauty nigh divine,
But, warping all her natal destiny,
Prostrate she lay before the shrine of vice,
Yielding herself a living sacrifice
To the deep blasting of the idol's breath.

The heart clings fondly to the last faint hope
That bindeth still the once dear to its love,
Rejecting credence whilst a doubt remains,
And so Pygmalion. Thought he, 'tis a phase
Through which her soul doth pass, like rippling streams
That filter for a space through earth's deep pores,
Emerging thence more pure and bright than erst,
And set himself with patient love to watch
The giddy current of her blinded soul,
For the subsidence of its troubled waves.

It came not; till his spirit sick'ning o'er,
Pour'd forth its bitterness and wounded sense.
" Oh! living lie! truth's outward counterfeit!
Fair masquerade of virtue's unknown charms!

Thou too hast perish'd from my trusting soul;
Thy beauty yet endureth, the fair sweep
Of limb and rounded form, such as my art
Can yield the senseless marble; but the soul
That made the work of heaven stand forth alone,
So peerless in its radiant loveliness,
Hath perished 'neath mortality's cold grasp,
And yielded up the patent of its charm.
Henceforth I can compete with Heaven, and fill
My world with bright creations as its own,
Unmarr'd by inner loathsomeness and sin,
That rushing through its pulses like a blight
Make beauty hideous. Thou, my soul, return,
Sit on thy throne, and with creative might
People thy kingdom with a beauteous race,
Fair form'd, and nobly featured, and the life
Set undulating on the Parian,
Whom viewing, thou may'st cry with lofty joy,
'Behold the life without its baser part.'
O Beauty! I have loved thee with full heart,
Follow'd thy shadowy guidance as the cloud
Sails at the unseen steering of the wind;
Sought thee in Heaven and Earth and Nature all,
Led by supreme adorings and desires,

Till by communion with thy perfect soul,
Mine hath grown wise, in measure, to discern.
Not now can I be satiate with grace
That gildeth but the superficial frame
With the false tissue of deep-seeming life;
The searching knife must pierce into the heart,
And shew a frame veined with the same warm
stream
That melts in blushes on the downy cheek.
My bright ideal, like the bow of heaven,
Hath faded into nothingness, and made
A blank upon the clouded sky of life.
Can my soul live and love not?

"I will call
Art my divinity, and bid her frame
New joys to cherish such as Earth hath not
Create by natural developement;
Nature shall be my monitress, and teach
The chisel knowledge of all loveliness,
That wrought upon the snowy Parian,
Shall give investiture of life's pure part,
Grace, ease, and motion's unexerted power.
Better no soul than one debauched and foul,

And shaming beauty with eternal blots;
Therefore my creature shall be beautiful
With all that makes up woman's excellence;
Youth's bloom imprinted on her gentle charms,
And tenderness set playing on her lips,
Whilst round her gracious presence for a robe
Shall float the vesture of pure modesty;
A woman, she, save in the fallen soul,
A spotless angel framed, but spiritless;
This being shall I mould, and with my love
Animate to ideal consciousness,
Then let her sisterhood pass humbled on,
Unheeded in the depth of my content."

PYGMALION.

PART II.

The Worker.

FORTH went he from the ebb and flow of men,
Whose busy vortex drowneth quiet thought,
To hold communion with wise Nature's soul
In solitude. Amongst lone woods he roamed,
Listing the murmurs of the swaying boughs
That quivered with the spirit of the breeze,
Threading their archëd aisles with solemn heart,
And hiving in his soul a myriad thoughts
That fell unseen upon him. Oft he stood
On mountain fronts, and gazed long hours away,
Tracing the sweep of hill and dale, now veined
With glistening waters, and now dark with groves,
Still changing till sight lost identity,
And the ideal and the real met.

He saw the sun enter the golden gates
Of Night, that closed upon his radiant path,
And left Earth wondering; and star by star
Unlid their shining orbs, and o'er heaven's plain
Wheel their bright cars to greet him in the East.
He saw the morn break beautiful and pure,
Like virgin from her slumbers, and robe earth
In dewy brightness, cresting the far hills
With glorious halos of oncoming day.
All loveliness of earth and sky he sought,
And pondered with a heart attent to learn,
Knowing that Beauty, like a parent stream,
Is nourished by each trickling rill that flows
Into it; and the soul that would be apt
To work its highest counsels out, must toil
Through long apprentice-ship to mastery,
By units gath'ring fitness for the whole.

Thus did he, till with spirit brimming up
With glorious inspiration, he returned,
And set the god-like in him to create;
His swelling soul grew patient to the work,
Wise with the sense of innate potency,
And on the shapeless marble still he wrought

With faith and firm assurance.
Many came
Amid their aimless wanderings, and stood
Beside that quiet worker, wondering
At the majestic purpose on his brow,
And vapouring forth their self-important views,
That turned his course as little as the air
Swerveth the eagle in his lightning flight.
Many applauded with patronic warmth
And empty commendation, and no scorn
Curled his proud lip, nor one defiant word
Echoed their nothings into transient life.
But as the marble grew beneath his hands
To shape and comeliness, his soul-deep eyes
Flashed with the joy of high accomplishment,
And scanned each valiant critic with a glance
That sifted all his littleness away.

Thus did he till his work stood perfected,
A woman beautiful with youth and grace,
But like a Vestal singled from her sex
To show the beauty of pure innocence.
Her form was such as rapt Endymion
Saw on the heights of Latmos when he slept

And dreamed Heaven down to him. A glorious shape
That to the brightness of ethereal charms
Join'd the familiar sweetness of a maid;
A soft clear forehead circled by the light
That heaven sets lambent on its imaged self;
A face that beaming on the heart of man
As by a silent teaching in the sense
Makes goodness natural. Upon each limb
Grace laid its sweet commandment lovingly,
Whilst the fair bosom glowed with tenderness,
As from the fulness of a soul beneath,
Woman's divinest attribute possessed
Unsullied and entire; and through the frame
And every feature radiating went
A lovely sense of gentleness and love.

Bright is the summer of Cyprus,
Undimm'd the skies and clear,
Blue and clear as a maiden's eyes
That loves and hath never felt sadness.
Then, Time is a sunlit river
Flowing 'mid flowers and green pastures
Brightly onward to heaven!
There is music pervading the air,

Music of voice and of instrument,
And the silver toning of laughters
Blendeth in jubilant chorus;
Bands of maidens and youths
With flowing garments of purple,
And zones jewelled and bright
As the mystic girdle of Venus,
Wreathëd with myrtle and roses,
And their beauty wantonly bared
To the swimming glances of passion,
Evermore sweep o'er the pathways,
Strewing sweet flowers as they go
To the sacred altars of Venus
'Neath the feet of the snow-white kine,
That must bleed at the shrine of the goddess;
Care is forgotten, for life
Hath no aim and no mission but pleasure;
Its cup is a foretaste of Paradise,
Drain the sweet draught to the dregs,
The fountain will flow on for ever!
'Tis the feast day of Venus—Hail! Hail!

Pygmalion stood beside his master-piece,
Still with his mind devote to mighty thoughts

And busy inspiration, for through Time
The worker must be constant to his toil,
Heedless of pleasure and the idle toys
For which man bartereth eternity;
Life is his seed-time, after life his rest.
Had he not joyed to scan that lovely form,
And mark each glorious lineament, that held
A model up to Nature of pure grace
Unblemished by the shadow of a fault?
Had he not loved with more than Artist soul
The beauteous creature of his heaven-drawn power,
And oped again the flood-gates of his heart
To the full current of humanity?
Had he not thanked the gods for victory,
And gloried in his strength with conscious might
That made e'en fame his fellow? Yet he stood
Silent and sad beside his finished work.
What lacked he yet? Life! life! for his creation:
"What have I wrought," he uttered, "what
achieved?
Naught! naught! my power hath wasted on a
stone,
Changed its rude seeming haply unto grace,
But as it was, so is it now, mere stone;

My beauteous image, emblem of my soul,
Cast in the mould of thought's supremest good,
Fairer than all of womankind on Earth,
Is yet more worthless and more transient
Than is the meanest wretch who feels the life
Throb quenchlessly within him. Time may strew
Its fragments blindly o'er the face of Earth,
Scatter its spotless beauties, yet pass on
And leave the world no poorer than it was.
There is no beauty separate from soul;
From it as from a spring flow all the streams
That clothe this dust with living loveliness
Else doomed to deep aridity and death.
O lovely daughter of my craving soul!
Hope of my life! Divinest shape of Earth!
Can I regard thy beauty thus and know
Thou art the empty semblance of a worthless thing.
Are those sweet charms where loveliness hath set
The limits of her potency, mere dust
Unnobled by the passage of a soul,
Rescued a moment from the senseless mass,
That soon again shall have thee for its own?
What hath my soul begotten? Death in life—
A child of Earth unblessed, unstamped of heaven.

First-fruit of Spirit love! is this thy fate?
Gods! hear me from your thrones! Must it be
so?"
Forth sped he.
Like a stream that is swayed in the sunlight,
Breaking in flashes of brightness,
The people of Cyprus were gathered
Around the temple of Venus;
Mirth and music ascended.
Amid the fumes of the incense,
Loud as when pleasure hath knocked
On a heart that is hollow and empty.
Maidens rejoiced in their shame,
And fancied their lewdness devotion,
Banishing thought from their bosoms,
And making them giddy with passion.
Men forgetting their birthright,
And the glorious spirit of freedom,
Made themselves slaves unto folly,
And lust, and imbecile pleasure.
Life was summed up in the Present,
For foolishness knoweth no Future.

Through the deluded mass Pygmalion prest,

As each true soul must on its course to Fame,
Blind to the follies that beset his path,
The empty pleasures, and fictitious joys;
Deaf to the jeers and mockings of the crowd,
Their sottish laughters and unmeaning mirth,
His senses all attent to his great aim,
Fixed on the prize of immortality.
Within the Temple separate he stood
From the base host of giddy worshippers,
And prostrated his soul with strong desire
At the bright shrine of Cytherea's power.

" O Cypris! goddess! Light of heaven and Earth!
That from the snow-crest of the waving sea,
The endless worker—the unresting soul,
Sprang'st in the glory of thy charms divine,
And Beauty mad'st immortal! That dost hold
The sacred urn of everlasting love,
Whose draught is life, strength, rapture to the soul,
And pouring of its fulness o'er the Earth,
Makest its drooping energies revive,
To struggle onward through the fight of life!
O thou divinest arbitress of fate!
Stoop from thy starry throne, receive my prayer,

And grant me life, breath, being for my work.
Let not the love that glorifies a man,
Sink 'neath the level of humanity,
And take unto its Holiest a shape
Of woman's dust engraven on a stone;
Grant that this first-fruit of my soul may be
Endued with lovely immortality;
That she may have the throbbing pulse of life,
Quick'ning with every gracious influence,
To work some sweet seraphic Purpose out,
And walking 'mongst Earth's multitudes exalt
Man's soul to worship Beauty, that when I
The Worker shall have gone unto my rest,
A glorious witness may remain to tell
That such an one wrought, struggled and attained."

Thus prayed he. And an answer stirred his soul,
"That which is born of Truth dies never. Time
Still takes its sweet impression as it flies,
And drops it seed-like into some wise heart,
Where it may blossom and bear fruit anew
To make its good perpetual. Thy prayer
Is heard. The fire shall go from Heaven. Thy work
Shall live."

Homeward he sped, and by his work stood soon.
O'er that sweet visage once so motionless,
To his rapt gaze there stole the rays divine
That bear all high intelligence of heaven,
And undulating o'er each graceful line
Made the cold stone angelic. Liquid eyes,
Bright with all pure imaginings, and full
Of young emotion, love, and gentleness,
Beamed softly on him in dim wonderment;
Whilst from her lips that parted half for speech,
Flowed the deep sweetness of a woman's smile,
And o'er his perplex'd spirit shed the light
Of Hope and glad assurance. All her frame
Glowed with the rosy hue of life and youth,
And melting from the rigidness of stone
Sank into attitudes of peerless grace.

And when conviction strengthened in his soul
As the awak'ning beauties of his work
Expanded 'neath the spirit influence,
He clasp'd the maid unto his beating heart,
As father might the daughter of his love,
Rejoicing with blent pride and tenderness

In the supernal beauty of his child.
Hearing within him murmurs of a voice—
" I have accomplish'd, have not wrought in vain,
Left no faint record written on the tide
Of life, to perish with its setting wave;
But my fair work shall live for evermore,
And through the phalanx of advancing Ages
Speed like a herald sounding to the world,
' Behold a man who crushed oblivion,
' And girding up his soul in faith and love
' Wrought like a God beyond the reach of Time!'"

ODE TO FANCY.

O! THOU art a sweet and playful thing,
And light as a lark upon the wing,
Pouring the melody of thy mirth,
In sunny showers down to the earth.
The sunbeams pave o'er the crystal waters
A pathway for thee to Triton's daughters,
Down in the depths of the waving sea,
Where their bright archëd palaces be:
There mermaids hasten unto thy side,
And sing their songs till the ravished tide
Feels the soft music through all its swells,
And whispers them o'er to the coral shells.
Fays are thy playmates at dewy e'en,
For o'er their land they have made thee queen,
Crowned thee with flowers of fadeless hue,
And drained thy health in the honey dew;
And over mountain, and hill, and dale,
'Lumed by the glow of the moonbeams pale,

Thy merry train in the stillness dance,
Like a beam of pleasure and radiance;
Thine are the revels each summer night,
Held on the mead by the glow-worm's light,
Till maidens, straying at early dawn,
Trace thy blithe footsteps upon the lawn;
Thus dost thou lead on thy joyous rout,
And trip around till thou'rt wearied out;
And in the harebells the yellow bee
Creeps in the morning to waken thee
Forth from thy sweet dreams of joy and love,
That rise in odorous breath above.

Like some fair wizard thou weavest spells
Over all flowers, and brooks, and dells,
Wreathing above every mossy bed,
Till with bright dreams it is canopied
And through the rose-coloured atmosphere
All things more lovely and bright appear,
Losing the faintness of earthly things,
And shining with heaven's illuminings.
Thine are the Naiads and Nymphs which rise
From dell and fountain to daze our eyes;
Thine are the spirits 'mid leafy trees,

Whose voices come to us on the breeze.
Thine are the maidens whose trackless feet
Bear to the flower cups their honey sweet,
Pressing their perfume till through and through
Is pierced the soul of the rising dew.

Lead me, sweet sprite, to thy sunny dwelling!
Is it where brooklets are softly welling
Amid the greenwoods with many a fall,
Making the lily-cups musical?
Is it where mosses and violets meet,
And blend their lives in an union sweet,
Whither the butterflies speed to tell
Glad tales of the flowers thou lovest so well?
Is't in the covert whose lonely shade
The ring-dove her resting place hath made,
Lulled by the melody of her note
Till dreams of Elysium round thee float?
Is't on the breast of the sunlit sea,
With ripples of glory to circle thee,
Bright flashing dolphins to bear thy car,
And waft thee to glorious isles afar?
Is't in some cave where the light of day
Borrows new hues from the diamond ray,

Paven with jewels and silv'ry sand
Borne by the waves from the mermaid's land
Is't in the arms of the balmy gale
Over the ocean thou lovest to sail,
Loosing the folds of thy silken hair
To float at will on the perfumed air?
Is it by valley or heath-clad mountain?
Is it by streamlet or limpid fountain?
Tell me, and I will come to thee,
Follow thy flight through immensity!

Dost thou not roam in the realms of sleep,
While stars above thee their bright watch keep,
Lapping the soul in a crystal sea,
Whose every swell is felicity?
And in the halls of her quiet home,
Where darkness pillars the starry dome,
Making all beauty more beautiful,
And keeping the moonbeams soft and cool,
Dost thou not sit till the morning beams
Weaving the fabric of happy dreams,
Bringing dear visions to weeping eyes,
Till sorrow transforms to paradise?
Dost thou not kiss sweet lips till they smile,

And murmur of joys they knew erewhile,
And build up hopes that are shatter'd quite,
Decking the past in a robe of light?

O! thou art a kind and gentle thing,
Bearing the gifts that *good* angels bring,
Joying in all that is bright and free,
And soothing the sting of misery;
If thou would'st dwell in my beating heart,
And breathe thy fragrance through every part,
I would ever love and obey thee,
Never slight thee and never betray thee
Into the hands of cruel scoffers,
Who sell their souls to fill their coffers;
Crush every flower beneath their feet,
And make the sole bliss of life—to cheat;
Cheat the greenwoods of happy ramblers,
To rear a race of slaves and gamblers;
Cheat the summer, cheat the spring,
Cheat the sweet flowers of their ministring;
Cheat the soft meadows and sunny skies
Of their glad tribute from glist'ning eyes;
Cheat the birds in their leafy bowers,
Cheat every day of its few short hours,

Cheat even life of its little pleasure,
Dealing its needfuls out in short measure;
Cheating all beauty while they draw breath,
But true to *one* commerce, that is—Death!

Come to me then, and I'll cherish thee,
Thou shalt my loving companion be;
From the cold world we will live apart,
And build up a new one within my heart.

WHAT IS A SIGH?

IT is the sound
Raised by the sweeping of an angel's wing,
As through the air
It bears a prayer
Of the soul's uttering.

It is the sweet
Melodious echo of some thrilling thought
Retold by sadness
Unto gladness,
Which memory hath brought.

It is the hymn
Breath'd ever by the votaries of love,
Whose dulcidence,
Soft and intense,
Soars dreamily above.

It is the sign
Of Earth's fraternity, the only tie
That links us all,
Both great and small,
In common sympathy.

It is the heart
Issueing from its prison house of clay ;
Perchance gladly,
Perchance sadly,
Wending on its way.

IONE.

SAD are the glances from thy deep blue eyes,
Ione,
Soft as the mirror of the summer skies
When twilight shadows o'er its surface steal,
And twinkling stars their radiant orbs reveal!
Why are they sad
Which were so glad,
Ione?
Have their rays bathed in dew-drops 'mid the air,
And still the sparkling moisture trembles there?
Then, smile, for dewy tears
Melt when the sun appears,
Ione!
Yet thou art very beautiful in sadness,
Ione!
More beautiful e'en than in gladness,
And the sweet music of thy gentle sighs
Comes like the language of thy speaking eyes;

What do they say?
Tell me their lay,
Ione!
Fain would I learn from thee what passing thought
Can with such plaintive melody be fraught—
Ah! wherefore turn away,
Stay, yet a little stay,
Ione!

REALITY.

O THE heart has dreams Elysian!
That steal o'er it calm and sweet,
Hushing pain like a magician
Who binds spirits at his feet.

But the forms that throng its mazes
Are too bright for mortal birth,
And the scenes that fancy raises
Far too beautiful for earth.

Let us turn with humbler spirits
To the things that God has made,
Pass the weakness flesh inherits,
Since the sunshine, too, has shade.

'Tis the pride of human nature
That makes life seem cold and drear,
Drawing up a dwarfish stature
To o'ertop its proper sphere.

Gath'ring round it misty fancies,
Like the mountain's cloudy wreath,
Till the spirit's errant glances
See no beauty underneath.

There are true hearts beating nigh us
As we fight the fight of life,
Hearts unstain'd by guilty bias,
Hearts unharden'd by its strife.

There are gentle bosoms swelling
With all motions pure and kind,
That unceasingly are welling
Solace to the weary mind.

Few there are without possessing
Some good virtue in their heart,
Whence, beneath love's soft compressing,
As from flowers, sweet perfumes start.

Dreamer, turn then to the real
With a frank and trusting soul,
Not alone to the ideal
Let thy genial currents roll.

Pierce the clay that oft encloses
The pure brightness of a gem,
Think thee, flowers less fair than roses,
In their sweetness rival them.

Thus in truth, and not in dreaming,
Life will blossom to the full,
Unto love's eyes all things seeming
Prism'd through the beautiful.

RETROSPECTION.

OH, my heart throbs ever wildly, half in joy and half in scorning,
As the course of my life's story dimly flits across my mind,
Now that fate seems clear and steady, and the mist that veil'd its morning
Has resolved into bright sunshine with the azure heaven behind.

And I cry with exultation—"Blessed he who feeling in him
Precepts of pure grace and beauty guiding on his willing soul,
Yields himself unto their teaching, nor lets toil nor danger win him
To forsake the race he runneth till he resteth at the goal."

I was sprung from lineage noble, with a spirit inly
burning
To uphold my name and honor taintless from the
blast of shame,
I was born to be a freeman, by my birthright there-
fore spurning
All the gilded chains of fashion that make freedom
but a name.

From the forms and outward emblems of the deep-
lored spirit Nature
Drew I inspiration early for the moulding of my
thought,
Gath'ring strength from her o'erflowing, till I grew
unto the stature
Of a man nerved to accomplish all the good her
wisdom taught.

So when years had ripen'd on me, and the world's
great portals yawning,
Bid me enter the enchanted palace of youth's mys-
tic life,
Eager, breathless to explore it, at each step new
wonders dawning,

I went on with stedfast courage, arm'd alike for
peace or strife.

And I loved, that I might ever in my bosom bear
a treasure
Strong to ransom life from sorrow, strong to fur-
nish it with joy;
So I sought with keenest insight—neither small nor
scant the measure
To content my requisition—purest gold without
alloy.

And I found it lying lowly, far beneath my proud
line's dreaming,
Who if they perchance had seen it, would with scorn
have turn'd away,
But I sought it with soul-gladness, e'en with pride,
for to my seeming
A pure gem is worth the lifting though it lie
amongst the clay.

She was fair, a lumin'd beauty rippling o'er each
chisell'd feature,

Changing ever like the sunshine playing on the
summer sea,
Revelations of God's spirit permeating through his
creature,
Making loveliness all perfect by infused divinity.

What to me though all her dow'ry were the wealth
of love and kindness,
And a heart full fraught with feelings vein'd with
gentleness and grace?
Which the worldling holds as nothing, smitten with
judicial blindness,
But which I o'er all things prizing, wed her in the
weak world's face.

Scared my kinsmen were and bitter for the shame
and the dishonour,
Said they, I had brought upon them and the noble
name I bore;
And my sire with passion burning launch'd his
deepest curses on her,
And as though I were a felon, drove me fiercely
from his door.

I was destined for some puppet, some gold image of
his choosing,
Doubtless, who was made to worship like the golden
calf of old,
With no merit but her riches, but such shame my
soul refusing,
I was cast forth without blessing, poor and guide-
less from the fold.

Poor?—Not poor, for she went with me, pouring
still with patient spirit
Balm upon my wounded feelings, peace upon my
burning soul;
So that though man's love was reft me, 'twas the
better to inherit
That which far transcends man's favour,—sentience
of Heaven's sweetest dole.

Words of scorn and deep contemning gave I back
for their reviling,
For my soul waxed wroth within me to be judged
by such as they,
Fools so sage in their great folly, that they shake
their bells, and smiling

With an imbecile self-blindness, sneer the wise of heart away.

Let them wear their masking purple, threadbare now with vilest uses,
All the ancient gloss and brightness faded from it through their stains,
They may be disgraced, degraded, but true nobleness ne'er loses
By relinquishing its trappings, whilst the spirit still remains.

Did I shame them that I ceded all the forms and false adorning
That doth deck them for their stations heedless of the stuff within,
And stood forth in my own fashion, such as God had made me, scorning
To be made a man of tinsel, to be honoured for my kin.

Did I shame them that rejoicing in the freedom of my spirit
I asserted all its fulness, spite of prejudice and pride;

Whilst they, slaves of wealth and fashion, trembling
cowards did not dare it,
Would not risk a pointed finger e'en to gain an
angel bride.

Was the noble name they cited but the badge of
slaves and vassals,
Bound beyond emancipation to obey another's mood?
Better far to be a peasant 'neath the shadow of
their castles,
Than debase the soul within me to such brutish
servitude.

What were they with all their lordship, all their
riches, measured duly,
That they looked with scorn upon her in her un-
adornëd worth?
Ashy fruit with surface golden, she with goodness
leavened throughly,
All her wealth by heaven imparted, their's derived
alone from Earth.

Oh! I felt a high compassion for their warp'd and
narrow feelings

As I press'd my bride unto me, and read o'er her gentle eyes,
Gaining deeper insight daily, meeting ever new revealings
Of the grace of woman's spirit, and her holy sympathies.

So we pilgrim'd on together, buffeting the ills about us,
Sharing hope, and joy, and sorrow, as we shared our daily bread,
Keeping still a pleasaunce scathless in our hearts, though all without us
Might be cheerless desolation, and the sky with clouds o'erspread.

Through much toil and tribulation, we attain'd at last to honour
With no succour from my kindred, I upreared my house alone,
And I see my cherish'd maiden, with admiring gazes on her,
Glide amid the high and noble with a grace beyond their own.

And those proud ones now are gracious, bowing
fawningly before her,
Whilst she with her true eyes calmly takes the
measure of their hearts,
Weighs aright the honied speeches, and the praise
they heap upon her,
Her own innocence instinctively disarming all their
arts.

For she knows their tongues are venal, sold to
flatter wealth and power,
And to crouch with serpent homage in the dust at
Fortune's shrine,
Ready to revile and slander if calamity should lower,
And to flout as base, deceitful, what they late had
termed divine.

Thus unmask'd and sifted throughly let them stoop
and fawn at pleasure,
Little reck I to revenge me better for their former
spite
As I mark their degradation falling on them in full
measure
When they humble themselves vilely, thus, to one
who reads them right.

THE STORMY PETREL.

FAR in the wilderness of waves,
Where vision dieth 'mid endless motion,
Where only the madden'd storm-wind raves,
And sinketh its chains in the soundless ocean;
Far from the ken and the power of men,
And lone as though Earth were in chaos again,
The Stormy Petrel cleaveth the air,
And maketh the surging billow its lair.

The black cloud scuddeth along on high,
Silent and swift as the angel Death,
Led by Euroclydon through the sky
Unto its victim with bated breath,
Whilst only God and the Petrel seeth
The path by which the Avenger fleeth,
And with shrill accent of wail and mourning
Riseth the Petrel's wild cry of warning.

Anon the bones of the wreck come past
Bit'erly-mock'd of the roaring tide,

From wave to wave in derision cast
With scorn and jeers at poor human pride;
And still the Petrel with lightning sweep
Circles their way through the raging deep,
Settling in awe on some shatter'd spar,
And tracking its course as it drifts afar.

Into this realm of the winds and waves
Man cometh not with his living soul,
But like the mounds over clammy graves,
Over his body the surges roll;
No mortal weeper hath seen his tomb,
Buried he lies in eternal gloom,
Save that the Petrel with wailing cry
Hover'd around as he floated by.

What doth the Petrel so far away
From the home of love and the field of strife?
In this lone spot doth the Petrel stay
To show the beauty and power of LIFE.
For the broad Earth and the boundless sea,
Time and the endless eternity,
All, all acknowledge the spirit's controul,
And like the frail body, were made for the soul.

TO ——

WHEN the stars are up and keeping
Holy vigils in the skies,
Whilst Night's train is passing slowly,
Footsteps hush'd, and voices lowly,
And on earth sweet dreams are steeping
Slumbering souls in Paradise,
In my heart there comes a vision,
Angel-like from its elysian,
Bent upon some blessed mission,
And its form resembleth thee
In thy grace and purity.

I with trancëd rapture gazing,
Scan each lineament divine,
Trace again thy pensive sweetness,
Beauty's soul, and love's completeness,
Heart and hands devoutly raising
Like a pilgrim at Love's shrine,

Evermore within me feeling
Like a charm thy beauty stealing,
Hushing pain, and sorrow healing,
And I pray to dream for ever
Gazing thus, and waking never;

For the morn comes, and the Real
Once again resumes its sway,
Scattereth these radiant fancies,
Cloudeth o'er thy gentle glances,
And still seeking my Ideal
Through this life I take my way,
Weary, heart-sick, longing, sighing,
Praying much, yet no replying,
Phantom Hope before me flying
Leading ever back to thee,
To behold thee in thy beauty,
Feel that love is only duty,
Meritless, save that so dying
Gain I Love's eternity.

THE MERMAID.

A MERMAID smoothing her sunny hair,
Fanned by the breath of the summer air,
Sang to me,—" Love, wilt thou go with me
" Down to the depths of the purple sea ?"—
" Maiden, ah yes ! I will go with thee,
" And lap my soul in felicity !"

Down we went through the crystal waters
Evermore waving round Neptune's daughters,
Down, till the light of the starry sky
Melted away like an echoed sigh,
And the rapt breast of the restless ocean
Sank into still dreams of past emotion,
Down, and we stood on a pleasant shore
Paven with shells from the Naiad's store,
Shining and rosy-lipp'd such as keep
The mermaid's songs for their balmy sleep.
Flowers there were set with sparkling gems,

Gleaming amid the white coral stems,
And flinging their measure of light and scent
Up through the translucent firmament.
And as the air by a bird's wing laven,
Or a deep pool by a white hand waven,
Floated the swells of the dewy tide
Round the sea-maiden and me beside.
Onward we went where a diamond portal
Kept the pure light of the dawn immortal,
Making the heart sicken o'er to win
The halcyon joys it enclosed within;
Entered we under its arching sweep
Into the palace hall of the deep,
Where 'neath the vault of its lofty dome
Have the nymphs and mermen gay their home;
There sat old Neptune upon his throne,
A foaming wave that was turn'd to stone,
And round about him his merry crew
With brimming cups of the purple dew;
Wandering far through the lumin'd halls,
Where light was bred in the ruby walls,
Stray'd the fair Naiads with golden hair,
That wanton'd about in the perfumed air;
And flowing robes round their white limbs waved,

Like moonbeams bright into substance laved.
Neptune in tones that spread far and wide,
" Ho! Ho! a man with a mermaid bride!"
And the blue dome rung with cruel laughter,
Till all the arches mutter'd it after;
Then came the nymphs in a radiant string,
And circled us round like Saturn's ring,
Forms that appearing to mortal eyes
Dazzle them so that the spirit dies.
Then to my mermaid old Neptune saith,
" Hymn the rash mortal unto his death!"
She with a voice that murmuring stole
Deep as a heaven thought into my soul—
" O! in the land that is under the waves
" To dwell with my love in the coral caves,
" To bind his brows with a diamond zone,
" And call the light of his eyes mine own;
" To roam with him through the boundless space,
" And make the billow our resting place,
" There sing our songs till we fall asleep,
" And dream of Elysium in the deep;
" Waves are flowing for ever and ever,
" O they will rock us for ever and ever,
" Hush every sorrow to quiet rest,

" And pillow love in each other's breast;
" O they will sink us deeper and deeper,
" Until they themselves sleep with the sleeper,
" Until there is only love awake,
" That cannot sleep for his own sweet sake;
" Come in my bosom, then, come with me,
" Down to the depths of the purple sea!"
All my soul thrill'd and panted for bliss
As pilgrims thirst in the wilderness;
I cried, " O maiden, whose softest sighs
" Are sweeter than all Earth's melodies,
" If thou wilt wander with me for ever,
" And naught have power our true hearts to sever,
" I shall forget all that earth calls fair,
" And all that I fondly treasured there,
" The meadows and hills and sunny dells,
" And the birds and fragrant heather-bells,
" And I will follow thee through the deep,
" Where waves shall rock us to tender sleep;
" All powers of ocean I will defy,
" And follow thee though it be but to die!"
Neptune then, " Youth thou hast bravely said,
" And meet art thou with a nymph to wed,

" So thou shalt live out thy little span
" Unscathed by the hands of the blithe merman."

So they bound me fast in cruel sleep,
And bore me silently from the deep,
And ne'er have I seen my mermaid more,
Though oft I watch for her on the shore.

THE SPIRIT OF THE AIR.

A SPIRIT came to me on the breeze
Sweet with the breath of the orange trees,
Floated about me, and murmur'd soft,
" O Poet! wilt fly with me far aloft?
" And I will show thee the realms of space
" Where the lightning can find no resting place.
" We will away to the home of morn,
" And see the first youngling sunbeams born.
" We will away to the cave of Night,
" And wake the echoes to sudden fright,
" And then we'll wander among the stars
" And mark the roll of their golden cars?"—
" Spirit! I'll go with thee through the sky,
" For my soul pants ever to soar on high,
" If thou wilt bear me upon thy wings,
" And guide me amid our bright wanderings."

Swiftly we went through the sunny air,
Higher than ever the skylark dare,

And the bright clouds where the summer beams
Slumber and revel in golden dreams,
Lay far beneath us like dewy fumes
Hovering over the flower-blooms.
Higher we went till the puny Earth
Dwindled away to an atom girth,
And the record of our rapid way
Was the far death of a starry ray;
Then we drew nigh to the palace bright
Where morning treasures her dewy light,
Cool'd by the breath of the angels' wings,
And sweet with their musical utterings.
There we saw the young day-beams awaken,
And the earth's rays from their soft tresses shaken,
And there we saw the sweet zephyrs rise,
That woo the flowers with gentle sighs,
And kiss the mist from the streamlet's tide,
As tears are kiss'd from a happy bride;
The angels of Joy and bliss were there,
Lapt in the folds of the balmy air,
Breathing their pæans till far away
The echoes went with the light of day;
The spirit said, "Hence the ray of morn,
"Like a poor child unto sorrow born,

" Wends to the earth with sweet smiles uplit,
" And from the darkness awakens it;
" But though it whisper of peace and love,
" And tell the world of the joys above,
" They will not hearken unto the voice
" Whose accents faint make the flowers rejoice,
" But still grovel on in strife and sorrow,
" And make the signal of war, ' the morrow.'"
Onward we went through the heavens afar
Swift as the course of a shooting star,
Until dark shadows began to fall
Around our way, like a funeral pall,
Deeper and deeper, and then the gloom
Grew thick as it were the Night's own tomb;
There was no sound save the rushing wave
Closing the furrow our passing clave;
There was no sound save the beating heart,
That at its own throbbings seemed to start;
There was no sound save the ebb and flow
Of my own breathing drawn long and low;
Then the air-spirit gave forth a cry
That rang through the arches of the sky,
Whereat a myriad echoes leapt
Forth from the darkness 'mid which they slept,

Shouted an answer in fierce surprise,
That rumbled far into faintest sighs,
Then slowly sank to their rest again,
And left the Night to her silent reign.
On we went whilst the sounds grew dimmer,
Till stars afar began to glimmer,
Like flashing lights on a lonely mere,
Like tapers dim round a sable bier;
Onward, till many a radiant world
In solemn glory across us whirl'd,
Shaking the air in their mighty march,
Like thunder beneath its prison arch;
Ever louder the swift wind bore us
The swell of their eternal chorus,
Filling the soul of the boundless sky
With strains of adoring harmony.
Past us came Mars all fiery and red,
Like a warrior stain'd with the blood he shed;
And his voice o'er all rang clear and high
Pealing for ever Truth's battle-cry;
Saturn came with his blazing ring,
Like a crown round the brows of a Titan king.
Circled by many a satellite,
That made his pathway through heaven bright;

The star of eve like a maiden sphere,
Gleaming with beauty and grace, drew near,
Sweeping along 'mid heaven's panoply,
The sweetest and fairest child of the sky;
Onward they came in myriad lines
From space whereon the sun never shines,
But fades away like a twinkling star
'Neath orbs whose glory is greater far;
Many a beautiful world appear'd,
Such as not even Fancy hath rear'd,
Sinless and happy as Heaven will be,
And stamp'd with the seal of Eternity.

But sadly we sank to Earth again,
And heard the discord and strife of men,
Like a harp that jars from a sudden fall,
And turns to discord tones musical.

WHY DO I LOVE THEE?

'TIS not because thou art so fair,
So beautiful unto the sight;
'Tis not because thy silken hair
Curls o'er a neck of spotless white;
'Tis not because thy speaking eye
Claims kindred with the deep blue sky,
Alone I love thee!

No! 'tis because around thee gleams
The light of innocence and truth,
Adorning with its radiant beams,
And pure reflex the charms of youth;
Because thine every word and thought
With thy soul's gentleness is fraught,
Therefore I love thee!

LADY ANNABEL.

SHE had suitors many, many,
The fair Lady Annabel,
But she loved him more than any,
For she knew he loved her well.
She was rich, but he was lowly,
Lowly in the world's esteem,
But that made her love more holy,
As the darkness gilds the beam;
For she knew his manly honour,
All the beauties of his mind,
And they sweetly stole upon her
Like the scent borne on the wind;
So she loved him ere she knew it,
Ere she thought to close her heart
'Gainst the tender spells that drew it
Evermore to take his part
When in idlesse or in malice
Others lightly spoke of him,

Careless that in his life's chalice
They poured sadness to the brim;
For he was a dreamer throughly,
Feeding on sweet Poesie,
And few knew his spirit truly,
And none prized it well as she;
But upon the thymy mosses,
With wild flowers by his side,
Blossoms that the summer glosses
For the brow of fairy bride,
He would lie and weave bright fancies
From the maze within his heart,
Which her gentle smiles and glances
Kindled with an angel's art;
For a firmament of beauty
Hung like heaven o'er his mind,
And it seem'd a sacred duty
To hymn all the fair it shrined;
So he praised her golden tresses,
And he thought them fair and soft
As the locks the sun caresses
On bright angels far aloft;
And her eyes so blue and tender,
Made for love to glisten through,

That their gentleness might render
Love as welcome as the dew;
And her cheeks with roses blushing,
And her lips with sunshine drest,
Her white bosom gently hushing
With its swells all ill to rest,
All came to him in his dreaming
Like things from another sphere,
Till bewildered by their gleaming
He felt only they were dear.
Must he perish, must he languish
For the love of one so fair,
Till the cruel sting of anguish
Change a blessing to despair?
He is poor, and favour never
Smiles on one so weak as he,
Poverty still comes to sever
All hopes of felicity.
But she loves him, and communion
With his soul gives strength to hers,
So they blend their lives in union
Careless of cold fashion's slurs;
She resigns what earth calls treasure,
Titled suitors, wealthy dower,
That is *commerce*, she seeks pleasure,

For she knows life's but an hour,
Far too short and full of sadness,
Far too full of grief and pain,
For the heart to barter gladness
For a shadow or for gain;
So she fondly stood beside him,
And she placed her hand in his
With a smile that seem'd to chide him
For the shade that veil'd his bliss,
As he thought how he could duly
Make return for all her love,
Only could he serve her truly,
Love her as the light above;
And she said " We will live gaily
In some sylvan hermitage,
Worshipping all beauty daily,
Till my foolish heart grow sage;
We will have sweet flowers about us,
Birds to sing from every tree,
No suspicious friends to doubt us,
So we must live merrily!"

Thus they went, and of their marriage
Jesting spake the giddy world;
Nobles, pillow'd in their carriage,

Laugh'd aloud with proud lips curled,
And fair ladies smiled their pity,
With a sigh for mortal folly,
Whilst rich merchants in the city
Frown'd, and called it, " Melancholy."
What they said, or what they ponder'd
Little reck'd fair Annabel,
As with joyous hearts they wander'd
By green vale and shady dell;
And she cried " O! life was never
Made to be ambition's fool,
Bound in fashion's chains, and ever
Banish'd from the Beautiful!".

TO JENNY LIND.

ON HER RE-APPEARANCE IN ENGLAND

MAY 4th. 1848.

SUMMER hath come, led on by sunny May
The blue-eyed, round whose brow the first pure ray
That trembles from the opening gates of dawn
Still seems to circle, and the mossy lawn,
As they glide gently onward, ever breathes
A beauty and a fragrance, which enwreathes
Within the being until every thought
With a strange mystery of joy is fraught.
And where the hazel forms a leafy screen
Of verdant matting, the cuckoo, unseen,
Chaunts forth her woodnotes through the stilly air,
Whose silent motions far the accents bear.
And thou hast come, sweet Nightingale! once more
O'er our entrancëd spirits to outpour
Thy liquid warblings! 'Mid the flow'rets' scent

And summer's gladness rises interblent
Thy loving welcome! Not the bird that sighs
Her thrilling love-tale through the moonlit skies
Of Italy, as erst to Juliet's ear
From the pomegranate tree 'twas wafted near,
Seizes the soul with ravishment more sweet
Than thy soft tones, stealing unto the seat
Of passion, waking echoes in the breast
Of love, and purity, and quiet rest,
Murmuring through the windings of the soul,
Till interpenetrated is the whole
With holy harmonies, and blissful sense
Of joyance, and straightway is refted thence
All baser feeling, and all earthly leaven,
By the dear magic of that voice from heaven.
Fair Priestess of the Beautiful! that bringest
Missions of sweetness from above, and flingest
In a rich flood of song—now faint, yet clear
As Helicon's own murmurs to the ear,
Now swelling till around our being floats
In thrilling cadences thy bell-like notes,—
The poetry of poetry, the deep
Mysterious essences whose wavings steep
Life in the bliss of angels, and the real

In the ethereal hues of the ideal ;
A welcome to thee ! heartfelt as the lay
Hymn'd by the panting lark to the young day,
Joyous and loving as the sunny beam
That greets the early primrose, when the dream
Of flowery revels through the noontide hours
First steals upon it. Such a joy is ours
Now, as with falt'ring tones our spirits hail
Thy glad return, O sweetest Nightingale !

THE GOLD SEEKERS.

EVER onward sweep the Nations, marching with a mighty train,
Prince and peasant, youth and maiden, toiling, struggling o'er Life's plain;

Turning from the land that bore them, from the loving ties of old,
Still to wander, weary pilgrims, o'er the wide world after gold.

Little reck they of the dangers, little reck they of the woes,
Urged along by strong endeavour, heedless both of friends and foes;

Gazing on the shadow moving at their sides till sun hath set,
Ever whisp'ring to their spirit, "Courage! we will grasp it yet!"

Over plain and over mountain, rocks their zeal
cannot resist,
Up the rugged heights they clamber till they perish
in the mist;

Down the precipital hollows blindly falling as they
speed,
Calling still with dying accents on their fellows to
take heed;

Over stream, and trackless ocean, with the storm-
cloud hatching nigh,
Ever waiting there to thunder at the bidding of
the sky;

Tossing on the angry billow, heart and soul beset
with fear,
Yet with longing all unshaken, onward through the
blast they steer;

Over marsh, and sandy desert, sinking 'neath the
scorching sun,
Hopeless, weary, madly thirsting, slowly dying one
by one;

Leaving many a bone to whiten by the wayside, and to tell
By mortality's drear tide-marks, how its surges rose and fell;

Through the spring, and through the summer, when the flowers are on the lea;
Through the Autumn when the blossoms fade and wither drearily;

Through the chill and ghostly Winter when the year is in its shroud,
And corruption preys on Nature, stooping fiercely from its cloud;

Through the light and through the darkness, through the rain and through the snow,
Striving onward without resting seeking it above, below,

In the earth, and in the water, in the rock, and in the clay,
Gathering up the sandy beaches, searching, sifting them away;

Never resting, but with spirits eager, breathless to attain,
Evermore they hurry forward to their purpose o'er life's plain,

With their garments waxen olden, and their sandals wearing out,
And the sinews growing weaker that once bore them up so stout,

With the vision ever dimmer to discern the cherish'd prize,
Till at length upon the highway, at each step some pilgrim dies,

His glazed eyes still feebly turning e'en in death unto the goal
That yet glimmers far beyond him, the life haven of his soul.

But a stalwart phalanx presseth onward still with hearts serene,
Strong in faith and stedfast courage, meeting toil with dauntless mien;

Working out their primal mission through the calm
and through the blast,
Gath'ring fitness for the Future from the Present,
and the Past.

Thus enduring, thus pursuing, upheld by a mighty
hand
Through all dangers of the travel, come they to
the Golden Land,

Find the treasures they are seeking richly pour'd
into their breast;
Toil and danger ever finish'd, now they sweetly
take their rest,

With the light of glory shining from the Godhead
on their souls,
Whilst above them the broad banner of Eternity
unrolls.

TO WOMAN.

BEAUTIFUL Spirit! Angel of the Earth!
That glidest through the storm-tost world,
And bearest
Blessings of peace and rest unto the weak,
Giddy and faint within its vortex whirled;
O! fairest,
Sweetest Pilot of the wavering soul
Through the wide-yawning gulfs and shoals of crime,
Whence issue siren-spells that seek
To sink the wayward in their noxious slime;
Emblem of Purity!
That like the star of Bethlehem dost lume
The wise of heart through this life's deepest gloom
To hope, and joy, and blessedness,
Hail to thee!
Thou art the Priestess of all Holiness!
Standing midway betwixt the earth and heaven,
Part shared of either,

Mortality inwrought with purer leaven,
Good sympathies, sweet thoughts, and stainless love,
That like distillëd perfume float above
To charm the breather!

O vision of soft eyes and flowing hair,
Mild gentle eyes that chasten as they glance,
And on their dewy brightness ever bear
The heart's warm language writ in radiance!
O blessed smiles! heaven's golden sunrays shed
On life's cold stream,
Renewëd summer when the old is fled
Like a dream!
O voice tinct with the spirit's sweetness,
Last tone of heaven's clear harmonies
Ere in the silence of wide space it dies,
Music's completeness!
O gentle laughters! rising from the crystal spring
Of joyance and free-hearted sympathy,
Pure rills to trickle sunnily
From eyes and rosy lips in liquid warbling,
Sweetly ye win us
To shrine the blest spirit of Beauty
Within us!.

O tender heart! Love's everlasting dwelling,
Beautiful fountain of all generous thoughts,
From whose unsealëd fulness, ever welling,
Come to mankind their purest pleasure draughts;
O gentle heart! Grief's only sanctuary,
Safe refuge from the rude assaults of woe,
Throbbing with mild compassion constantly,
That never change nor withering can know;
From the pure spring of virgin slumbers
Peace falls upon the soul when thou art by,
Lulling it sweeter than Philomel's numbers,
Lapping it deep within felicity.
O brightest! dearest! still there floats to thee
The incense of pure minds eternally,
Thoughts sown of loveliness, that bud and bloom,
And through the summer-time of after years
Shed sweet perfume,
Love-imaginings that rise through tears
Like rainbows, and soft dreams
That are the heaven-gleams,
Caught from the deep
Of Elysian sleep!

THE POET.

YOU might think, to look upon them with their
arms around each other,
And the tale that he is breathing softly crimsoned
on her cheek,
That a sweeter spell enwound them than the love
she bears a brother,
And that sweeter words are spoken than the words
that brothers speak.

For, fair one, she loves him dearly, dearly as a
woman's spirit
Full of gentleness and beauty loves all pure and
holy things,
Just as though some blessëd angel, screened from
sight, were floating near it,
Fanning every tender feeling into motion with its
wings.

So she hears with echoed rapture hopes that in his
breast are swelling,
Of the glory and the honour that have sunned his
poet's dream,
Charmed him by their bright illusion madly from
his quiet dwelling
To immerse him in life's ocean, there to lose him
like a stream.

Ay! look in her eyes, poor poet, kiss the tears that
tremble brightly
On their fringes till thou deem'st them her pure
soul distill'd for thee,
They are true ones, they are fond ones, and that
vision, coming nightly,
May refresh thee like a fountain rising 'mid sterility.

Backward from her upturned beauty did he smooth
the golden tresses,
That Madonna-like fell clust'ring round the soft-
ness of her cheek;
'Twas a frank one, and a fair one, with the grace
that truth impresses
Beaming o'er it without shadow, so he gazed but did
not speak.

Then he whispered, "Bright May, dear May, in the world where I am going,
Going, it may be unwisely, but some magic draws me on,
There to win the fame and honour with whose fire my soul is glowing,
Thou shalt be my guiding angel, thou shalt be my helicon.

I will paint thee in my verses, thee, so beautiful and tender,
Till that world shall thrill with pleasure, and pure hearts shall cherish thee;
Bright May, dear May, they will love thee, and thy gentleness shall render
Earth again a sunny Eden dedicate to Poesy.

They will crown me for *thy* beauty, they will love me for *thy* sweetness,
They will shrine my name in glory, hear it like a household thing,
They will feel the spell of beauty, think of heaven for thy meetness,
Thus I'll do the poet's mission, thou an angel's ministring."

So he went into the wide world with bright hopes
around him playing,
Youth to make his footsteps buoyant, and firm trust
to nerve his heart,
Fame and glory clear before him like a sun the path
arraying,
Witless that the golden vision of his dreams could
ere depart.

II.

There are thousands in the highways buffeting the
waves beside them,
Struggling onward without respite in pursuit of
sandbuilt gain;
There are thousands sinking daily, but the selfish
crowd deride them,
Only hurry on the swifter—there's no time to pity
pain.

Ah! what hope for thee, poor poet! in the race
that they are running,
When the jar of stormy passions makes thy temples
wildly beat;

Can'st thou wrestle with the torrent, can'st thou
stand against their cunning,
Who will crush thee without mercy, like a flower
beneath their feet.

Wherefore did'st thou leave thy dwelling 'mid the
calm and pleasant places,
Where no sorrow came to rouse thee from the
heaven of thy dreams,
Where the wood-birds gave thee music, and the
path the wild bee traces
For its sweetness thou could'st follow, or repose by
gentle streams.

O poor world! immersed in folly, O dull world!
that will not hearken
To the music of a Poet singing of the Beautiful,
Close your heart against its teaching, though it be
so sweet, and darken
All the sunshine of the spirit by the coldness of
your rule.

* * * * * * *

Who would bid us draw the curtain that conceals
the poet's sorrow,

Who would need to *hear* his anguish when they
look upon his brow,—
It is written there in tracings far more true than
tongue could borrow,
It is brimming in his glances, once so bright, so
woeful now.

Gaze upon him! dost thou know him? to his long-
left home returning,
For his step is very feeble, and his cheek is very pale,
And amid it like a sunset is the hectic plague-spot
burning,
Ye who know no shatter'd hope-dreams, gaze upon
him—there's the tale!

O the holy love of woman! O the gentle love of
woman!
Breathing like a balmy zephyr on the fever'd brows
of care,
Centrate sweetness of all sweetness, only in its
sorrow human,
Joy without you were a phantom, grief without you
were despair!

See! how tenderly she leads him with her arm
around him pressing,
As to shield him from the rough world that had
wrought him so much woe,
And his eyes are filled with moisture, scarcely can
he breathe his blessing,
But she feels it in the throbbing of his full heart
as they go.

Gaze again into her kind eyes, gaze into them,
weary poet,
Fill thy soul with holy calmness from the fountain
of her love,
If there's peace for thy poor spirit in this earth
they will bestow it,
For she is a gentle angel sent to bless thee from
above.

And she said, as she bent o'er him, half in language,
half in glances,
For there is a hidden meaning far too deep for
words to tell,
" We will dwell," she said, " with nature, nourish-
ing all gentle fancies,

And the lark shall be our minstrel, and the flowers
shall love us well."

So he smiled upon her gently with a glance more
sad than weeping,
That a bitter thrill ran through her like a harp
struck suddenly,
And she thought upon the summer with cold sha-
dows o'er it creeping,
And she thought upon the flowers fading on the
mossy lea.

But she turn'd her till the paleness, and the tears
that would be flowing
Faded from her that they might not be the mirrors
of his own;
Smiling comfort on him ever, evermore as they
were going,
For she said "Ah! there are none to smile on
him but I alone."

III.

He is lying in the sunshine with the blithe birds
round him singing,
There are flowers beside his pillow, there are flowers
beneath his feet,
Summer pours her treasures round him, like a
gentle maiden flinging
Fragrant blossoms from her bosom o'er a path to
make it sweet.

She is kneeling in the sunshine with the radiant
glory o'er her,
And his palm is on her tresses, her's are folded on
her breast;
He were very calm and happy, only for the love
he bore her,
Which was far too sweet a feeling to resign it e'en
for rest.

" Bright May! dear May! draw still nearer, nearer,
dear May! till my spirit
Sun itself within your brightness, as the lark doth
in the day;

Soon the air will be so lumined that my weakness
will not bear it,
So I'll gather new strength from thee to support
me on my way.

" There are tears within your eyes, May, let me
kiss them from your eyes, May,
They will taste as sweet to me as do the dews
upon the rose;
Dear eyes how I love them! they oft tell me of
the skies, May,
Tell me secrets of the Blessed more than mortal
spirit knows.

" Ah! I knew not in the old time half the sweet-
ness that doth linger
Round the simple things of Nature which the proud
heart passes by,
Now I see there's not a wildflower but doth point
with warning finger,
To the unobservant passer, truths of immortality.

" Bright May, thou shalt be my beadsman, and
thy golden tresses drooping,
Round thee shall be all the vesture that my loving
soul shall seek;

Thou shalt be a meet confessor for a lowly poet
stooping
To breathe forth his secret failings, and read pardon
on thy cheek.

" Bright May! I have been a strayer from the
narrow path that wanders
Through this world to lead the traveller to a glad
eternity,
I have been an erring madman, for the blind heart
never ponders
Till the fancied light it follows lead it from felicity.

" I have been most false and perjured, false to all
a poet's duty,
Even whilst my heart was boasting proudly of a
poet's creed,
I have loudly claimed the title of a worshipper of
beauty,
Yet could gaze upon a flower till I thought it but
a weed.

" Yes! I dwelt amid the woodlands with bright
streamlets singing round me,

Sunny dells, moss-paven alleys, and cool shades to
ramble in;
All was happy, all was peaceful, yet e'en there am-
bition found me,
Charm'd me forth into the rough world to engulph
me in its din.

" Yes! I wearied of the woodlands, of the streams
and sunny places
Where I lay me in the summer to dream all the
noontide o'er,
Like the child of a sweet mother lapt within her
fond embraces
Drawing fitness from her beauty to lisp forth in
poet's lore.

But the time is drawing nigh; now, when my soul
sublimed from folly
Shall see all things in their trueness, with no sun-
veil drawn between;
Know that glory is mere weakness, and that aim
alone is holy
Which, wrought out in life with patience, fits man
for a higher scene.

EVENING.

FAR away in Western ether
Day and Night at length have met,
Like old friends that come together,
And their eyes with tears are wet.

In the heart, too, joy and sorrow
Meet together without pain,
Loving friends who, on the morrow,
At the dawning, part again.

'Tis the time for sweet contentment,
Thoughts all dedicate to love,
Soften'd down from all resentment,
Chasten'd as the light above.

'Tis the time to breathe a blessing
Forth on all things good and fair,
That make life so sweet, repressing
Like a charm the strokes of care.

Tis the time when those who love us
  Rise like stars in Fancy's sky,
Shining steadily above us,
  Though afar, in seeming nigh.

Sure our life is but a gloaming
  Deep'ning slowly unto Night,
To give rest unto the roaming,
  To the sad, dreams of delight.

Should not *life*, then, be contentment,
  Only dedicate to love,
Softened down from all resentment,
  Holy as the light above.

LIFE.

MANY a bright and pleasant vision
Hath the heart in youth,
Visions that the wizard Fancy
Conjures by sweet Necromancy,
Ever robed in hues Elysian,
From the world of Truth;
Many a bright and pleasant vision
Cheers the heart of youth!

Just as though the curtain parted
From the Life Unseen,
And a portion of its gladness,
Unalloy'd by any sadness,
O'er the ripening spirit darted
Like the morning's sheen,
Making us awhile pure-hearted
And our sky serene.

Many a pleasure from the real
Hath our manly prime,
Though the mystic light is shaded,
And the rosy dreams have faded;
For our strengthen'd spirits see all
Things matured by Time,
Growing out of the ideal
Unto truth sublime;

Blossom unto fruitage golden,
Hope to certainty;
All things by divine transition
Keeping pace with life's ambition,
New joys springing from the olden
As we pass them by
Climbing still, by faith upholden,
Onward to the sky.

Many a pleasant recollection
Hath the heart of Age,
That life's tide hath staunchly breasted,
Wrought, achieved and nobly rested,
Musing with calm retrospection
Their past pilgrimage;

Many a sweet and wise reflection
Hath the heart of Age ;

Looking forward, dreaming ever
Of the Better Land;
Waiting for the promised glory,
That shall bind their temples hoary
With a brightness fading never
On that holy strand,
Crowning life's devout Endeavour
With a bounteous hand.

SORROW.

THROUGH the Earth a Spirit goeth
Onward still from morn till night,
Silent as the Time-stream floweth
Out of darkness into light.

And her heart is very tender,
Full of love and kindliness,
Yearning evermore to render
Goodness fuller, error less.

Through the Earth the spirit wendeth,
And full many a little child
With light heart her course attendeth,
By her gentle eyes beguiled;

Turning to her fond embraces,
Playing round her as she goes,
With no shade on their glad faces,
Deeper than the budding rose.

A maiden dreaming of her lover
Like a star amid the night,
Felt the spirit bend above her,
In between her and the light;

And she quivered back in terror
From the spirit's offered kiss;
Ah! how often, thus, doth error
Backward fright our souls from bliss!

Then the spirit "Ah! thou dearest,
Wilt thou close thy heart from me?
Through the shadow that thou fearest
Heaven's own light will shine on thee.

"Like the streams that most refresh us
In the desert parch'd and drear,
Sorrow renders love more precious,
Makes the cherish'd one more dear."

On—the spirit circled gently,
Kindly round a Poet's heart,
Gazing through the veil intently
After life's diviner part;

And the poet bent to meet her,
For he said " The truth will be
Made through Sorrow ever sweeter,
Ever clearer unto me.

" We are blinded by the sunlight
From the heaven's *unclouded* blue,
But through mist we eye the One-light
Till we read it through and through."

To the beautiful the Spirit
Open'd wide her loving breast,
Wooed their souls to nestle near it
And from life's excitement rest,

Whispering, " Sleep on Sorrow's bosom,
Dear ones, and your souls will rise
With fresh sweetness on their blossom,
Richer perfume, brighter dyes."

Most shrunk from her, but some weeping
Yielded to her soft controul;
And whilst on that bosom sleeping
Heaven-dew fell upon each soul.

Young and old fled from her ever
Waving off her proffered grace,
Thwarting each divine endeavour,
Trembling still before her face;

And she said " Ah! ye are blinded,
Seeing not the things that are,
For unto the earnest-minded
Sorrow is life's guiding star;

" Not delusive, not unsparing,
Richer fraught with good than pain,
Unto life sweet blessings bearing
Though she scatter them in rain."

I.

Written at Ulleswater.

THE tide is rippling to my very feet,
The mountains are before me, and around,
Stretching in misty grandeur till they meet
In one dim bourne, their hoary summits crown'd
With cloudy chaplets, such as might have bound
The new-born Thunderer when Saturn fell,
All wonder-stricken, from his mighty throne.
The sun is shining upon wooded slopes,
And distant headlands, with faint shadows thrown
Amid its brightness like the shatter'd hopes
Of a young noontide, and its golden light
Crests the upheaving waters till each swell
Is tremulous with glory, and the sight
Pictures strange fancies which no tongue can tell.

II.

THERE is a spell by which the panting soul
Shakes from its stainless pinions all the gyves
Wherewith our frail mortality still strives
To bind it downward 'neath its stern controul;
When springing from the earth like the sweet lark
That wings its flight in music to the sky,
Amid the spheres it wanders, where the eye
Trembles to blindness, and the last faint spark
Of Earth's far gleaming flickers and expires;
Thine is the charm, dear Poesy, which sets
The cagëd spirit on its heavenward flight,
And fills its being with those pure desires,
And holy aspirations, which like light
Shower on the world in distillations bright.

III.

WE wander on through life as pilgrims do
O'er trackless deserts to a distant shrine,
Weary and parch'd, and to our longing view
Springs many a false mirage of joy divine,
That fades before us as we fain pursue
The empty picture which our fancy drew.
O thou, my heart! seek not the empty shows
And gilded nothings of this little Time,
But let thine endless effort be to climb
Above Earth's petty vanities and woes
Unto a nobler range of feelings, joys,
Which no false leaven of decay alloys,
But whose substantial sweetness may increase,
And make thy journey pleasure, and thy slumber peace.

IV.

SWEET spirits of the Beautiful! where'er ye dwell,
Whether upon the misty mountain tops
With mantling crags about ye, or in dell
And sunny valley, by the hazel copse
Wherein the ring-dove nestles, or by streams
That wander amid woodlands, with the sheen
Of noontide trembling through the leafy screen
Down to their mossy banks in fitful gleams,
That murmur with the linnets and at e'en
Sigh with the plaintive nightingale, and oft
Mirror your bright eyes in the sparkling dew,
Circle me ever with your joyous crew,
Bring inspirations to me bland and soft,
And sun my slumbers still with happy dreams.

V.

WE are ambitious overmuch in life,
Straining at ends of hard accomplishment,
And goaded onward by poor discontent,
We build our little Babels up through strife,
And bitterness of soul, and motions rife
With passions that oft slay the innocent,
Like Priests of Lust plunging the cruel knife
Into the victims of their wilderment.
Not thus do thou, but with a patient hand
Place thou thine acorn in the fertile soil,
Labouring ever with unhurtful toil,
And cheerful hope until the seed expand,
Grow with the strength of truth, and ripening Time,
And stand at last in majesty sublime.

VI.

MOUNTAINS! and huge hills! wrap your mighty forms
Close with a mantle of eternal cloud;
Gather around ye the fierce band of storms;
And let the stainless snow-drift be your shroud.
Back from your rugged steeps, and caverns hoar
Bellow in hoarse disdain the tempest's roar;
Laugh at the rolling thunder; let the flash
Of its fierce lightning lumine but your scorn;
Down your deep-furrow'd slopes let torrents dash,
And on the winds their hollow rage be borne.
Ye mighty ones! Why should ye bow your pride,
And doff your venerable crowns, or dress
Your wrinkled brows in smiles, or lay aside
The dread insignias of your mightiness!

VII.

To Ella.

OFTTIMES I gaze upon thine eyes, fair child,
Till sense forgets all but the beautiful,
And my entranced and raptured heart is full
Of blissful visions, pure, and bland, and mild
In their o'erstealing, as the rosy sleep
That falls upon an infant, wafting it
In balmy dreams to heaven. Within the deep
The thrilling sea of their blue loveliness,
By sun-reflected gleams of heaven uplit,
My spirit bathes in sweet unconsciousness
Of aught material, and oft doth drink
Of beauty there, whose freshness never dies,
Till, pleasure-lapt, it feels as it could sink
Beneath the waves, and enter paradise.

VIII.

I TRAVERSE oft in thought the battle-plain
Of my past life, 'mid many a shatter'd dream
Of pleasure, and of hope, which, youth in vain
B[illegible]ed on the shifting sands of Time's swift stream,
Fond bulwarks 'gainst the strong assaults of pain;
And 'mid their ruins, like an exiled man
Gazing on scenes where he can dwell no more,
I stand and mourn their sweet enchantment o'er,
Where both life's pleasures and its cares began.
Earth crumbles 'neath our feet as we walk on,
And leaves a gulf behind none can retrace;
Its pleasures flash a moment and are gone;
But if we treasure in our soul *love's* grace,
That will refresh and gladden all our race.

C. WHITTINGHAM, CHISWICK.

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